Stories from The Great East Japan Earthquake

There are stories we want to preserve

There are memories we want to pass down

Stories from 3.11

Satoru Hiura, Rinko Ueda, Ume, Mari Okazaki,
Keiko Okamoto, Riho Sachimi, Mayu Shinjo,
Yuki Suetsugu, Nagamu Nanaji, Tachibana Higuchi,

There are memories we want to pass down
There are stories we want to preserve

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Stories from 311

Satoru Hiura
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Ume
Mari Okazaki
Keiko Okamoto
Riho Sachimi
Mayu Shinjo
Yuki Suetsugu
Nagamu Nanaji
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What is "Stories from 311"?

It was January 2012, ten months after the Great East Japan Earthquake. What can a manga artist do for the people involved? Satoru Hiura came up with an answer, and set up a new project called "Stories from 311".

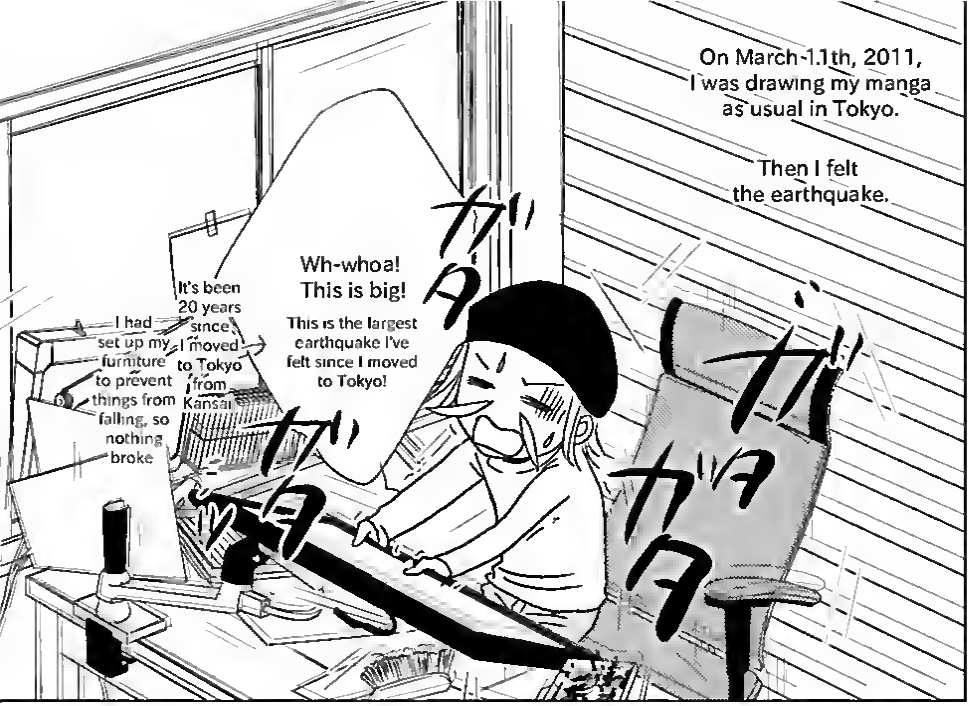
After March 11th, 2011, many stories have been born where disaster struck. Sad stories, stories of bonds forming between communities and families under harsh circumstances, young people overcoming the disaster and becoming more mature, and encounters between volunteers and the local people. What if manga artists visited these places personally, and wrote these stories as manga? Would they be able to become storytellers? These are the thoughts that started this project.

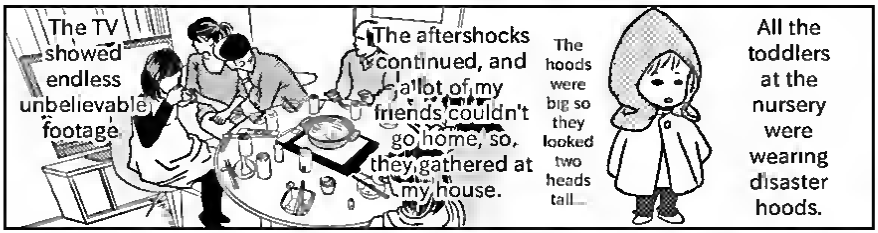
In response to this call to action, many manga artists from different magazines came together.

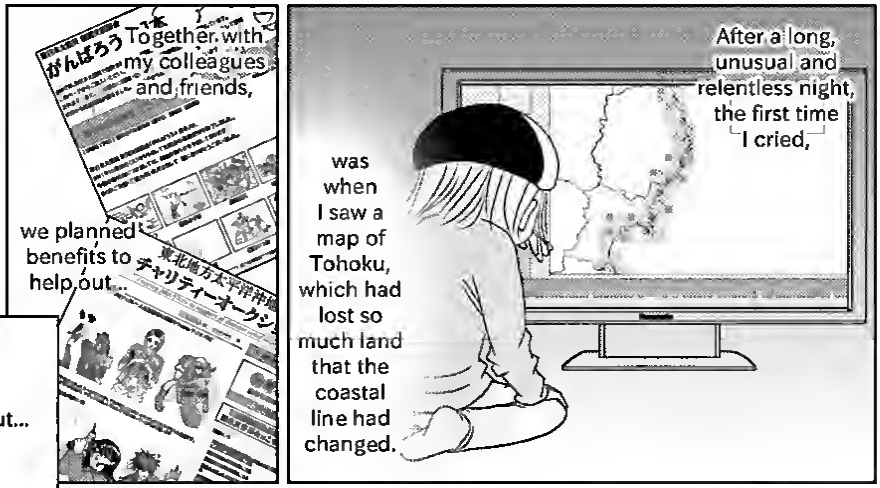
Kodansha's "Kiss" editorial department supported this project and set up a page on their homepage "Digikiss," publishing this as a web manga. We collected stories from this series and published this book. This book and e-book, published on March 11th, 2013, will donate all its revenue, royalties, and copyright fees to rebuild the areas affected by the Great East Japan Earthquake.

Prologue

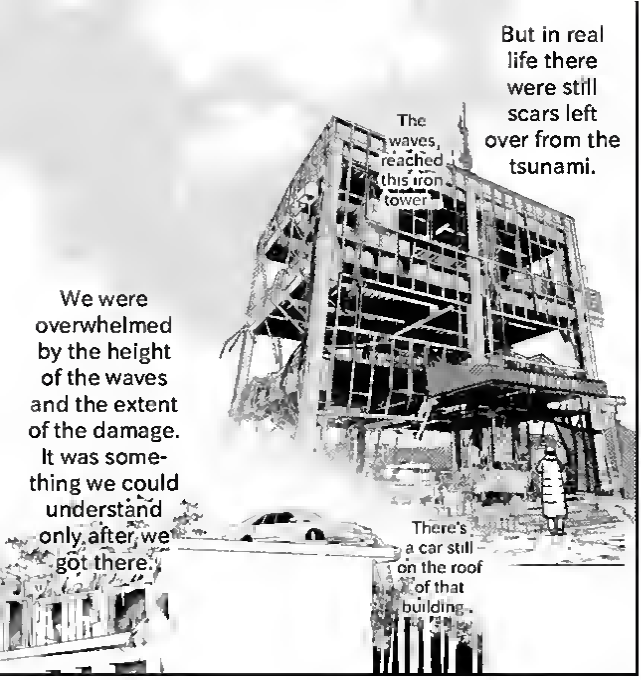
Satoru Hiura

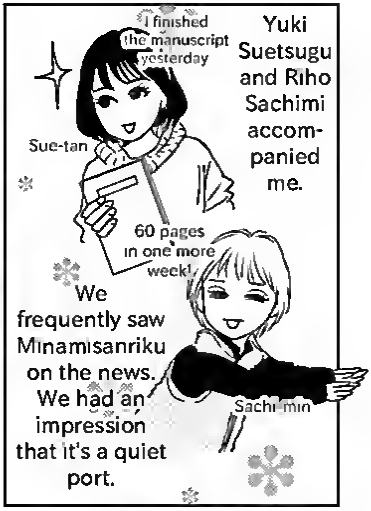

On March 11th, 2011, I was drawing my manga as usual in Tokyo.
Then I felt the earthquake.
ガタ
ガタ
ガタ
Wh-whoa! This is big!
This is the largest earthquake I've felt since I moved to Tokyo!
It's been 20 years since I moved to Tokyo from Kansai
I had set up my furniture to prevent things from falling, so nothing broke

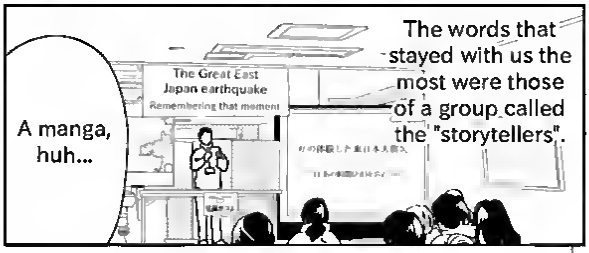

The TV showed endless unbelievable footage.
The aftershocks continued, and a lot of my friends couldn't go home, so, they gathered at my house.
The hoods were big so they looked two heads tall...
All the toddlers at the nursery were wearing disaster hoods.

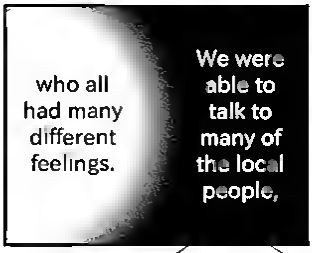

がんばろう
Together with my colleagues and friends,
we planned benefits to help out...
But...
After a long, unusual and relentless night, the first time I cried,
was when I saw a map of Tohoku, which had lost so much land that the coastal line had changed.

My "everyday life,"
is to draw manga.
I thought that the most important thing,
as people not directly affected, was to continue our everyday lives.
...the stories of the victims and volunteers.
I want other people to know and also preserve ...
made a suggestion.
My manager, Massu
Really?
It was warmer than I thought it would be.
Then, a friend that volunteered at Tohoku...
...make the stories into manga?
Hiura-san, could you and your friends...
In February, we visited Minami-sanriku.
But I wanted to do something...
Really? Is that okay? You said you were busy this year
Surprisingly most of them agreed.
A person from Kodansha's KISS magazine took care of the editing and bookmaking
And so, thanks to the contribution of many people, this project came into being.
It took me a while to make up my mind, but I asked around and contacted other manga artists.
After traveling around the world, she volunteered at Minami-sanriku. She's very smart
Abe-chan
Abe-chan will go with us too. She's familiar with the place.


But in real life there were still scars left over from the tsunami.
The waves reached this iron tower
We were overwhelmed by the height of the waves and the extent of the damage. It was something we could understand only after we got there.
There's a car still on the roof of that building.

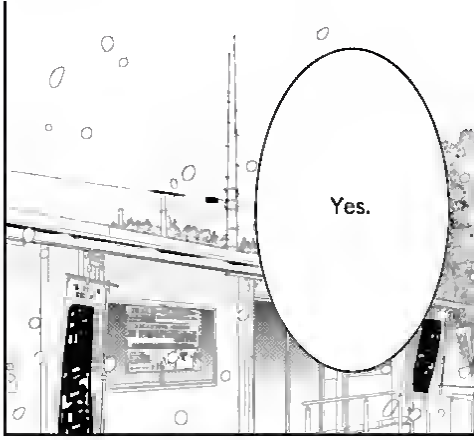

I finished the manuscript yesterday
Sue-tan
Yuki Suetsugu and Riho Sachimi accompanied me.
60 pages in one more week!
We frequently saw Minamisanriku on the news. We had an impression that it's a quiet port.
Sachi-min

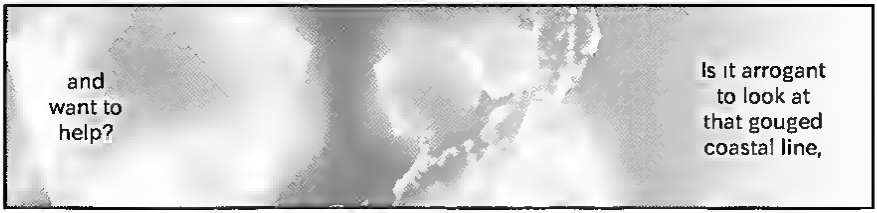

A manga, huh...
The Great East Japan earthquake
Remembering that moment
The words that stayed with us the most were those of a group called the "storytellers".

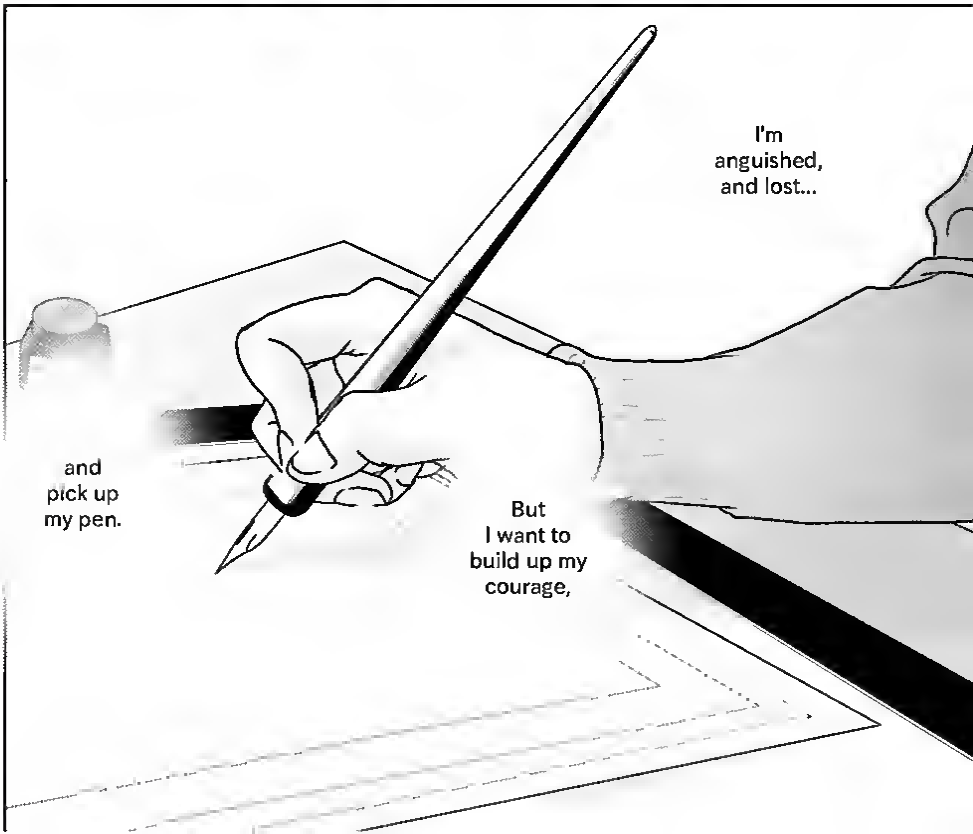

We were able to talk to many of the local people,
who all had many different feelings.

You need to make sure you're prepared to tell the stories of others.
And you are trying to publish these stories, right?
We pay extra attention to talk about others' experiences as well...
There are many survivors who won't... No, can't talk about it.

Since that day, I've been thinking...
Isn't there something we can do...?


Yes.


and want to help?
Is it arrogant to look at that gouged coastal line,


I'm anguished, and lost...
and pick up my pen.
But I want to build up my courage,

Story 1

Yuki Suetsugu

Minamisanriku-cho, Miyagi

14:46
March 11th
2011
Wha-
The merchandise at the fish shop I worked at fell,
Whoa!
and the industrial-sized refrigerator even moved.
It was as if the ground fell for a moment, then an intense tremor lasted for over a minute.
Ah-!
Katsuya Yamauchi
Age 26 (at the time)
Resident of Iriya, Minamisanriku-cho
Employee of Marusen.
Okay--
What-? That seems like a bit much, boss.
Don't underestimate earthquakes.
Go home!
Hey, Yamauchi, how is it outside?
Is...is it over...?
We should close the shop and go home just in case.
None of the houses are damaged.
Oh-- it seems fine...

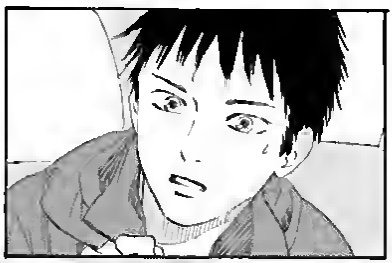
Oh...
But...
Is Grandpa okay?
A tsunami's coming for sure--
Wow, that scared me.
I wonder if my house is okay?
Might go to the ocean to check.
How high will it be?
I'll go home first.
I decided to go home near the mountains,
and not see the ocean.
A tsunami is approaching.
Please evacuate.
A tsunami is approaching.
The crisis management department called endlessly for evacuation.
On the way I saw that the stop-lights were broken and traffic had stopped.

A tsunami is approaching.
I started having...
Gradually,
ドキン
ドキン
...a bad feeling.
Please evacuate to higher ground.
.....
A tsunami is approaching
Please evacuate
ドキン
Oh, Kat-chan!
I thought I'd at least save the TV...
Nori-chan, what are you doing!?
Nori-chan...
!
Huh!?
バーッ
Idiot!
Run away!!
It was a gut instinct--
My friend's actions seemed completely useless.

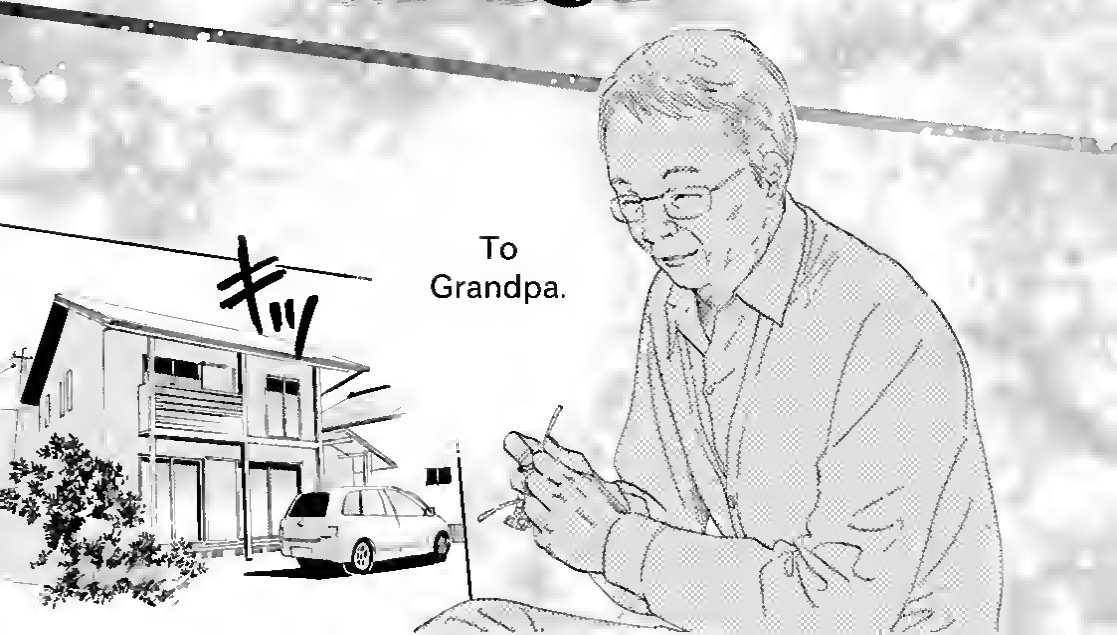
Please evacuate.
Please evacuate.
I'll be fine-
Where are you evacuating to, Nori-chan?
I'm going to the hospital near the sea.
It's high so I'll be fine.
Don't you need to get to higher ground!?
!
Hurry!
The road...
Oh no...
Power lines!?
Drive through!
Hurry!

The cars behind you can't get through!
Just go, boy!
Lady, that's dangerous!

Thank you!
Thanks!
Hurry!

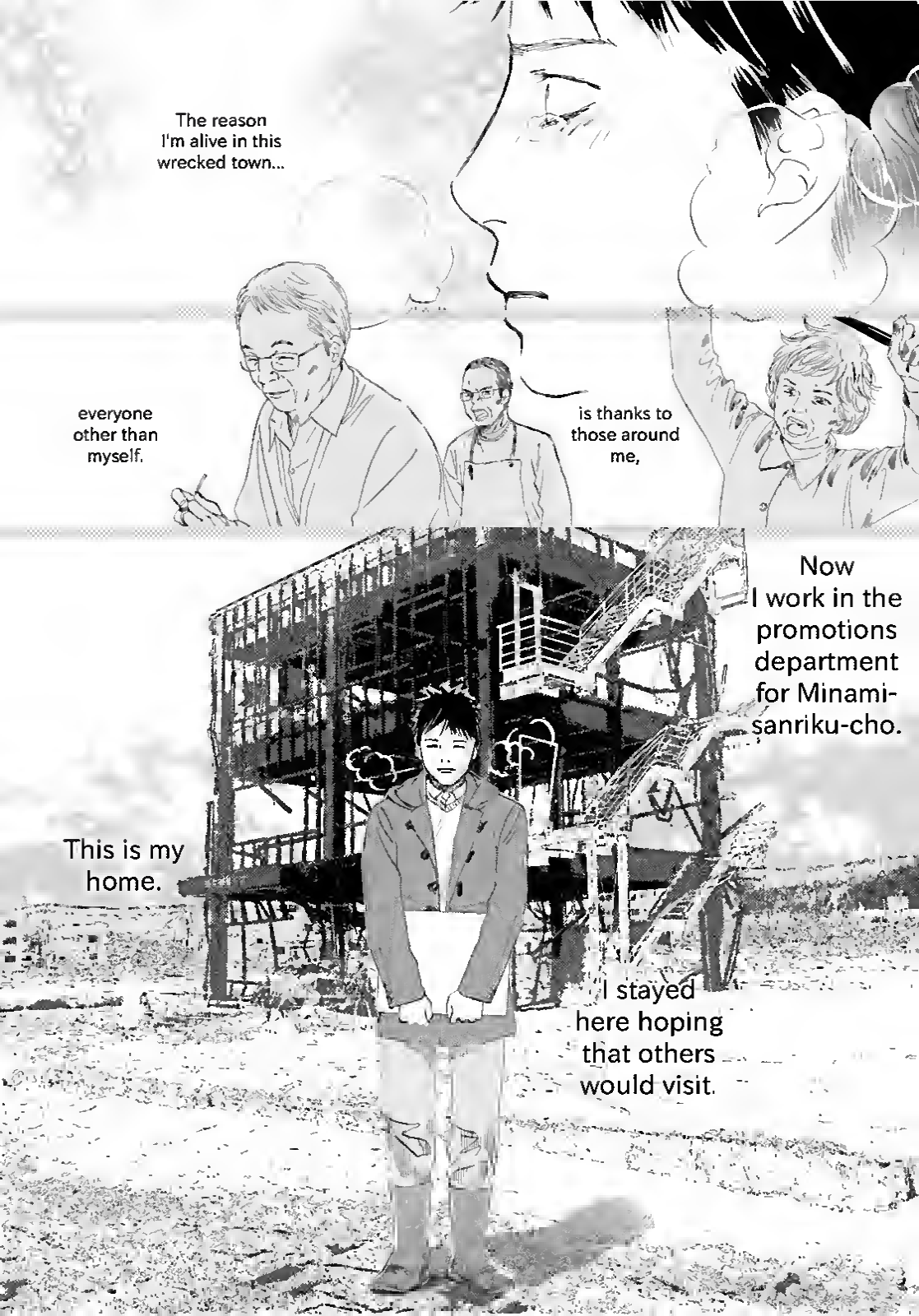


Hurry, get home.
Hurry, get home.
Get home--
The tsunami won't make it to Iriya


To Grandpa.

huff
huff
Thank god...
huff
huff
I made it.
Ah...
That's right...
He died last year.
Grandpa isn't here anymore.

The tsunami made a huge gash in my homeland.
That day...
That . that's the crisis manage-ment depart-ment . ?
Ohhh ...
My friend who I split up with that day didn't make it.
I couldn't save him.
If I had made him change his mind..:


The reason I'm alive in this wrecked town...
everyone other than myself.
is thanks to those around me,
Now I work in the promotions department for Minami-sanriku-cho.
This is my home.
I stayed here hoping that others would visit.

I'm Yuki Suetsugu.
During my visit I was able to meet many hard working and earnest people. I want to keep writing. I want to spread their stories as well.
And, thanks to:
Kanyo
Hotel Minamisanriku
The view,
the food, ser- vice!
All were great!
Please visit Minamisanriku!

Story 2

Riho Sachimi

Minamisanriku-cho, Miyagi

When I try to remember, my chest tightens.

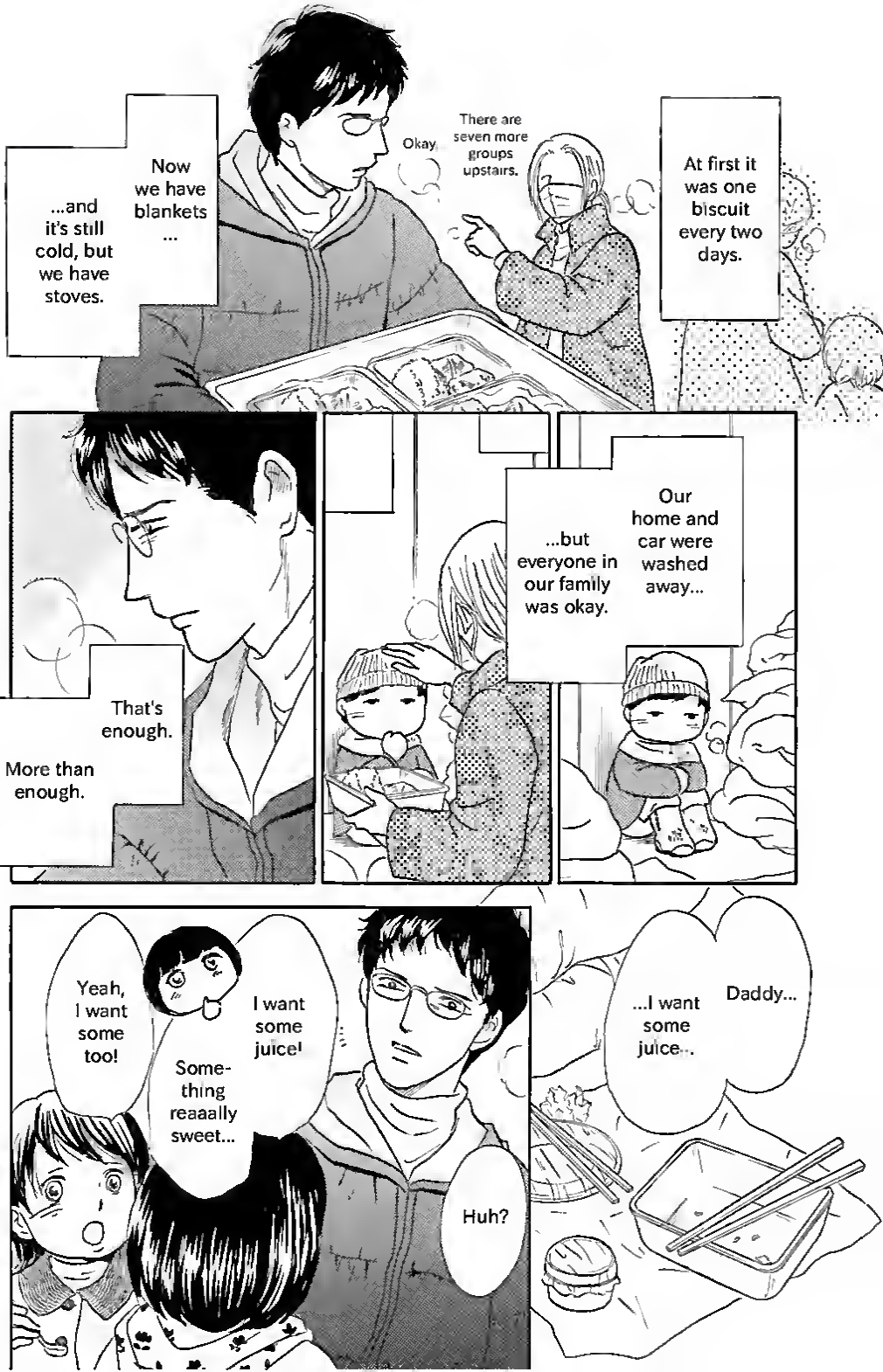
I can't remember... what happened that day

Mr. E (33, company employee)
Resident of Minamisanriku-cho, Miyagi.

The lunches are here!

Please help me pass them out!

Now, food is served three times daily.

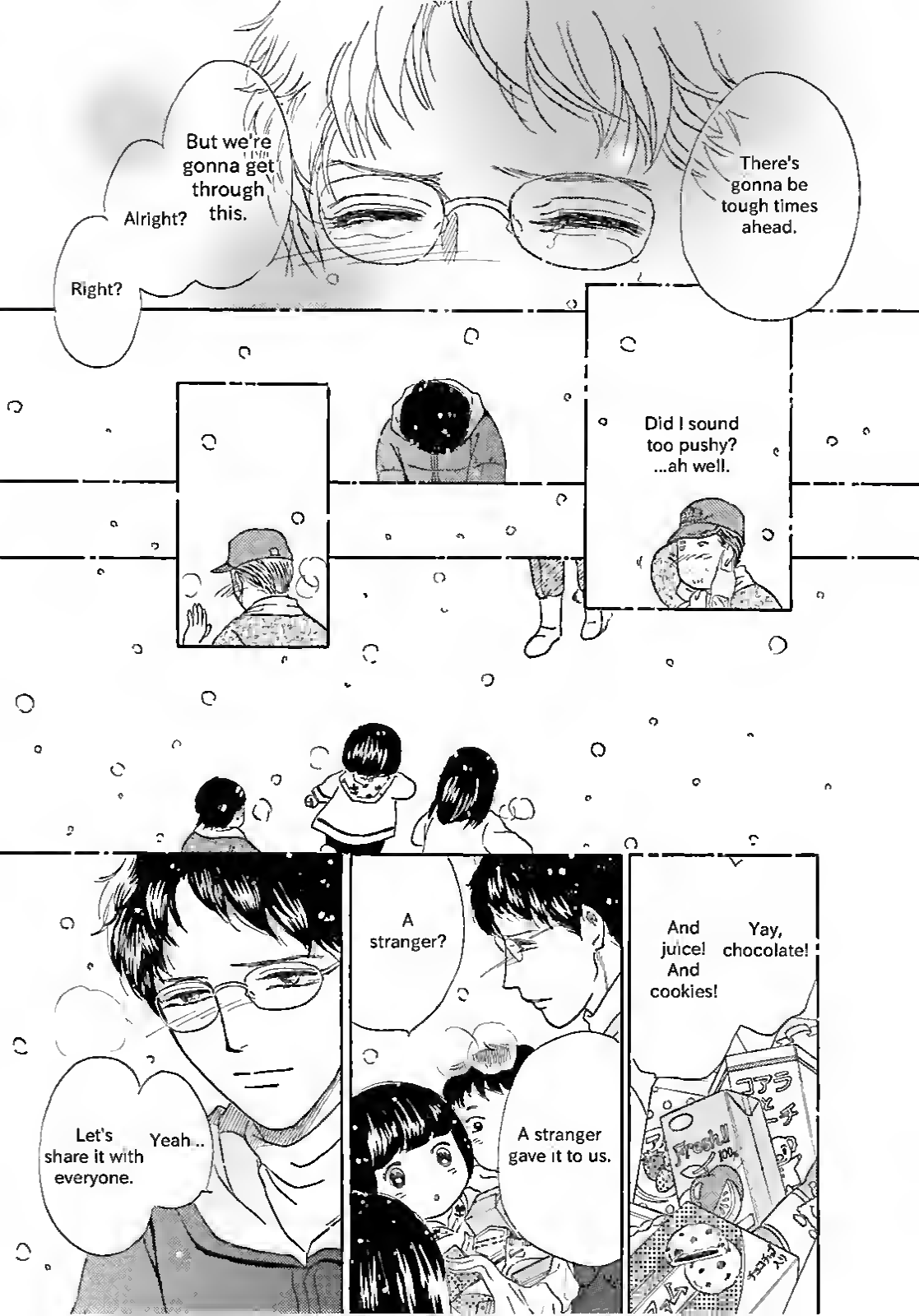

At first it was one biscuit every two days.
There are seven more groups upstairs.
Okay.
Now we have blankets ...
...and it's still cold, but we have stoves.
Our home and car were washed away...
...but everyone in our family was okay.
That's enough.
More than enough.
Daddy...
...I want some juice...
Huh?
I want some juice!
Some-thing reaaally sweet...
Yeah, I want some too!

It's been nearly two weeks since the disaster..
...The kids have only eaten cold rice balls, water, and tea.
Oh my
I want a chocolate--
Juice, daddy, juice!
Well it's a good thing they're relaxed enough to ask for that sort of thing...
...though buying some is another story.
Oops.
You can line up for four hours at a gas station and come out with nothing.
Our tank was full
Damn it, this is a dead end too.
We have to take a detour and go to Ishinomaki.

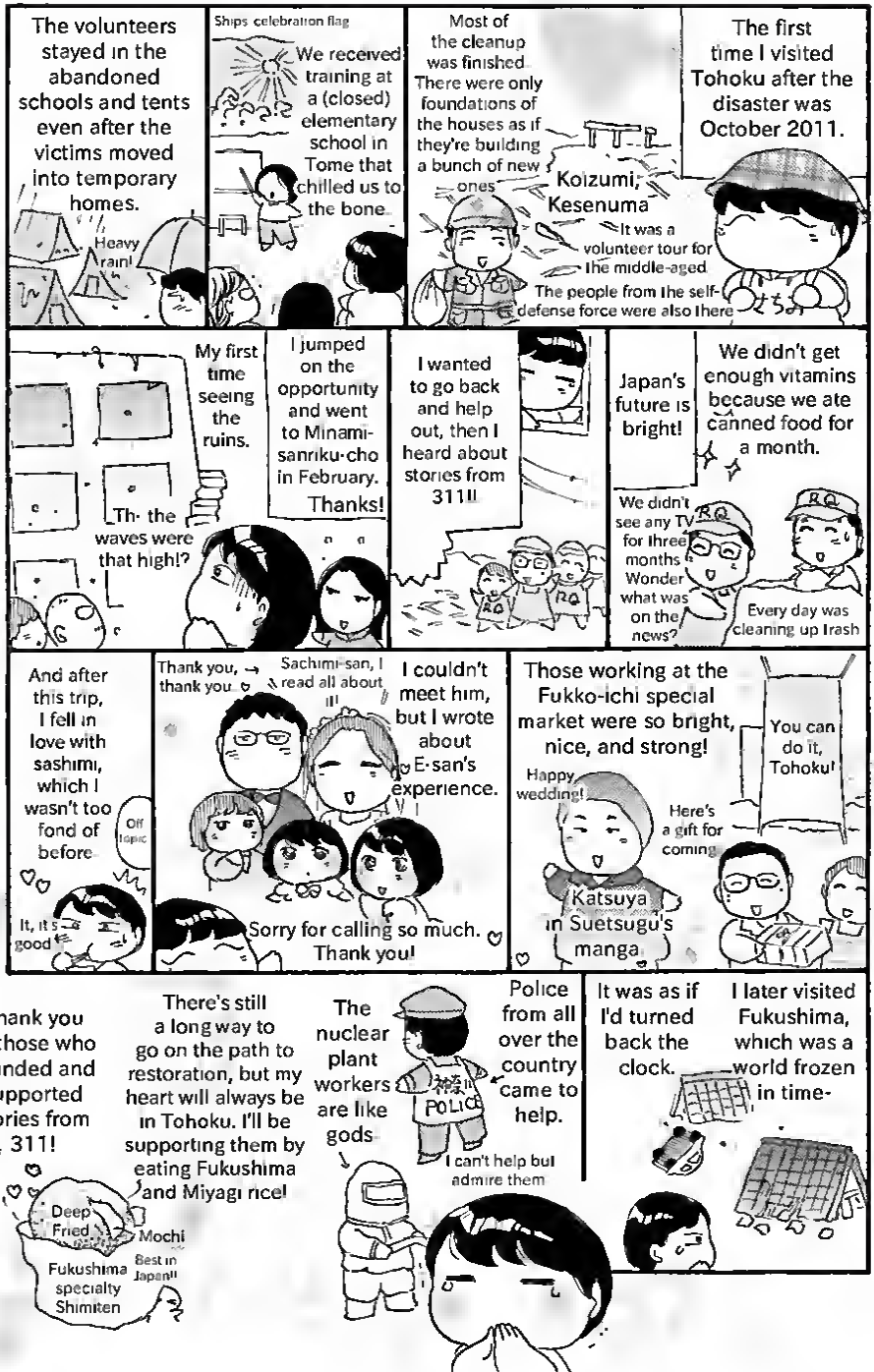
We might not get back to Shizugawa Junior High until night at this rate. The kids are waiting...
Well, I'll pick you up after I go to the pharmacy.
Whoa... That's a lot of people. Will you be able to buy anything?
...I'll get in line.
Hopefully there's a store somewhere..
We searched Ishinomaki, Tome, and Kanuma.
After five hours, we finally found a store that was half open.
It's snowing again.
brr
"You can line up for four hours at a gas station and come out with nothing."
I hope I can walk away with something at least...
How long have they been waiting?

When will this end?

You're from Shizugawa, right?
Take this.
I was thinking of going to Shizugawa after this.
But I don't even know where to go.
But...I
This person waited so long...
Please, take it.
It's okay.
Take it.


But we're gonna get through this.
Alright?
Right?
There's gonna be tough times ahead.
Did I sound too pushy? ...ah well.
A stranger?
A stranger gave it to us.
Yeah ..
Let's share it with everyone.
Yay, chocolate!
And juice! And cookies!

Together.
Thank you stranger!
Let's eat together.
Let's eat together!
Hey--
Yeah!
Thank you...
Thank you!
Thank you!
Let's keep on living... together
Thank you!


The volunteers stayed in the abandoned schools and tents even after the victims moved into temporary homes.
Heavy rain!
Ships celebration flag
We received training at a (closed) elementary school in Tome that chilled us to the bone.
Most of the cleanup was finished. There were only foundations of the houses as if they're building a bunch of new ones.
Koizumi, Kesenuma
It was a volunteer tour for the middle-aged.
The people from the self-defense force were also there.
The first time I visited Tohoku after the disaster was October 2011.
My first time seeing the ruins.
Th- the waves were that high!?
I jumped on the opportunity and went to Minami-sanriku-cho in February.
Thanks!
I wanted to go back and help out, then I heard about stories from 311!!
Japan's future is bright!
We didn't get enough vitamins because we ate canned food for a month.
We didn't see any TV for three months. Wonder what was on the news?
Every day was cleaning up trash
And after this trip, I fell in love with sashimi, which I wasn't too fond of before.
Off topic
It, it's good
Thank you, thank you.
Sachimi-san, I read all about it!
I couldn't meet him, but I wrote about E-san's experience.
Sorry for calling so much. Thank you!
Those working at the Fukko-ichi special market were so bright, nice, and strong!
You can do it, Tohoku!
Happy wedding!
Here's a gift for coming.
Katsuya in Suetsugu's manga
Thank you to those who founded and supported stories from 311!
Deep Fried
Mochi
Fukushima specialty Shimiten
Best in Japan!!
There's still a long way to go on the path to restoration, but my heart will always be in Tohoku. I'll be supporting them by eating Fukushima and Miyagi rice!
The nuclear plant workers are like gods
POLICE
Police from all over the country came to help.
I can't help but admire them
It was as if I'd turned back the clock.
I later visited Fukushima, which was a world frozen in time-

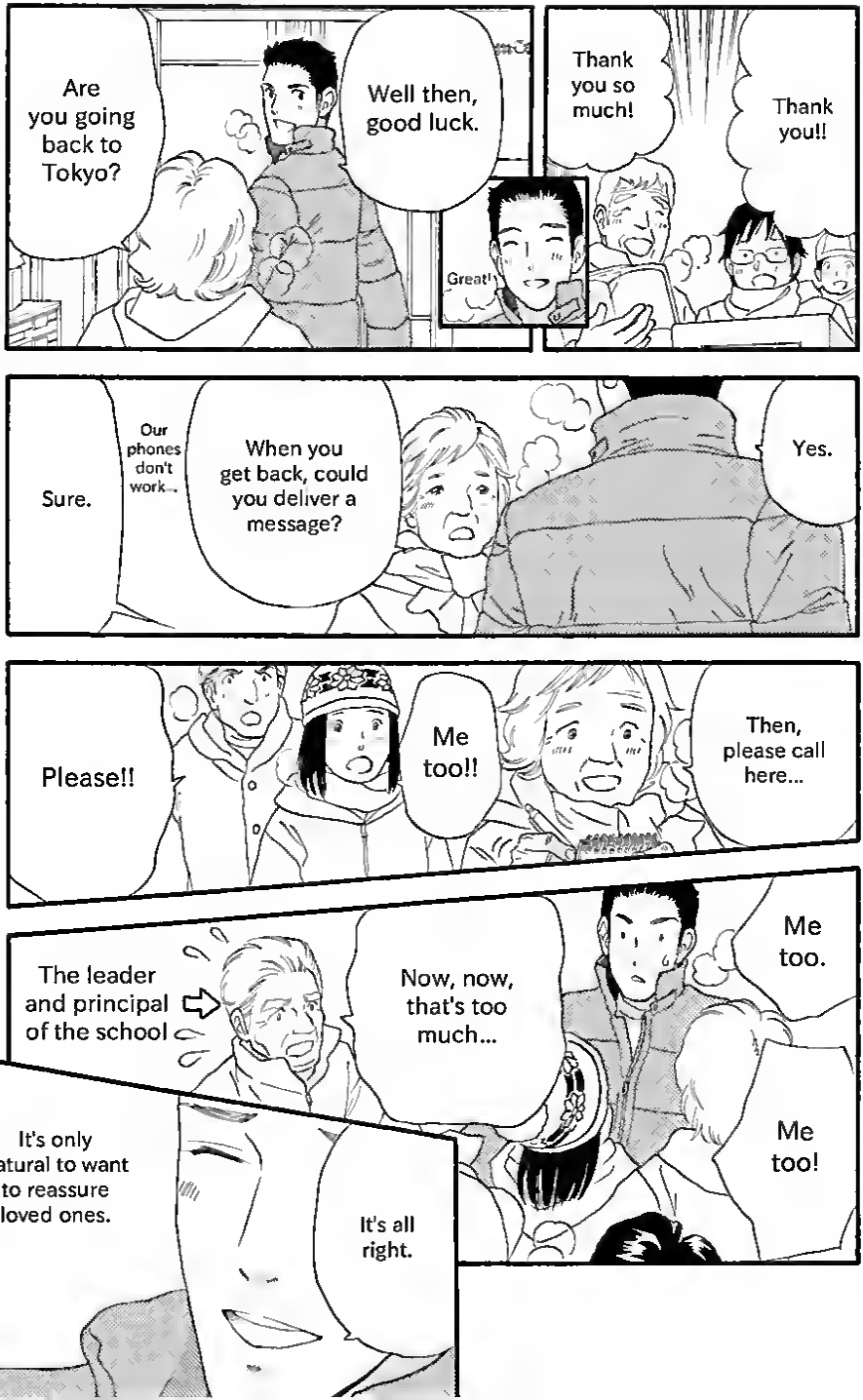
Story 3

Rinko Ueda

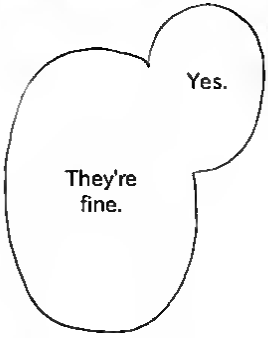
Ishinomaki City, Miyagi

Koji Hiruta. Resident of Tokyo.
40 years old. Divorced.
On March 11th I was in Osaka. I heard about the earthquake and I drove as fast as I could to my ex-wife and her family in Iwate.
I picked up relief supplies on my way east,
and sped my white van north...
Far north.

I bought so much stuff...
I decided to take the food and supplies to a small evacuation center.
Umm....
Th thank god
What?
Everyone's fine!?
But when I was close to Sendai,
I was able to contact her family.
I headed for the Oshika Peninsula, but the roads were cracked and covered in debris.
My heart hurt... thousands were washed away here.
I brought supplies from Tokyo...
Umm...
When I arrived at Ohara Elementary, I found over 200 evacuees who were cooking foods for themselves.


Are you going back to Tokyo?
Well then, good luck.
Great!
Thank you so much!
Thank you!!
Sure.
Our phones don't work...
When you get back, could you deliver a message?
Yes.
Please!!
Me too!!
Then, please call here...
The leader and principal of the school
Now, now, that's too much...
Me too.
Me too!
It's only natural to want to reassure loved ones.
It's all right.

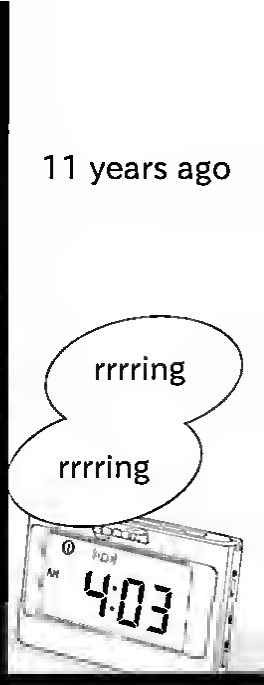
Really!?
She's ok?!
Thank god!!
H... Hiruta?
They think I'm suspicious ...
I'm calling on behalf of Ms. A at Ohara Elementary in the Oshika Peninsula...
I got a signal near Fukushima, so I made my first call.
Sorry for calling you suddenly. My name is Hiruta...



"Okay."

With that one word, I could feel the happiness on the other end of the phone and I felt happy, too.

Why...
Why am I...

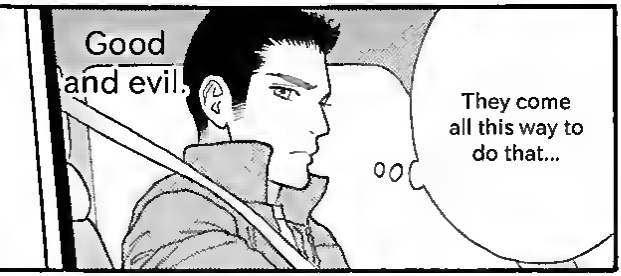


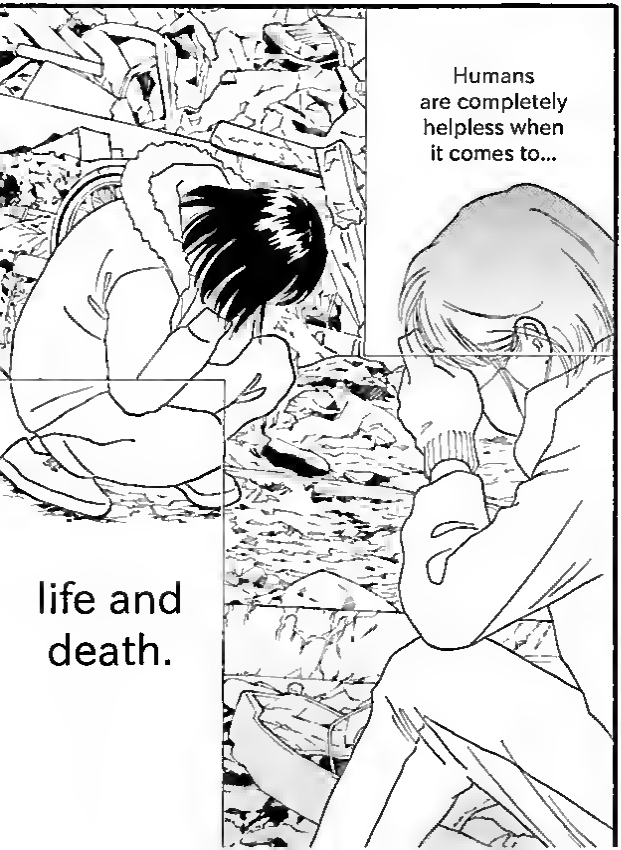
My brother...

...went to see his newborn son in Nagoya, and crashed with a large car...

A single phone call informed me of my brother's death.

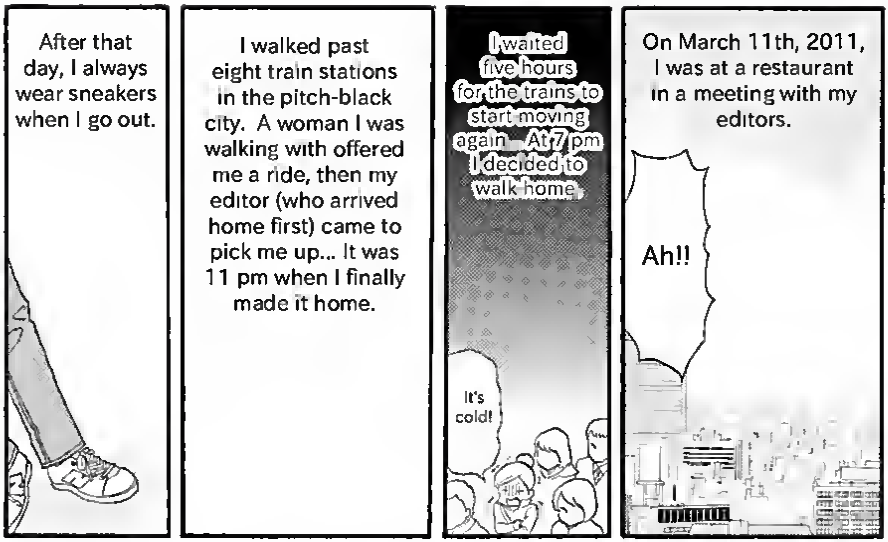
While driving through the disaster area, I saw many robberies.

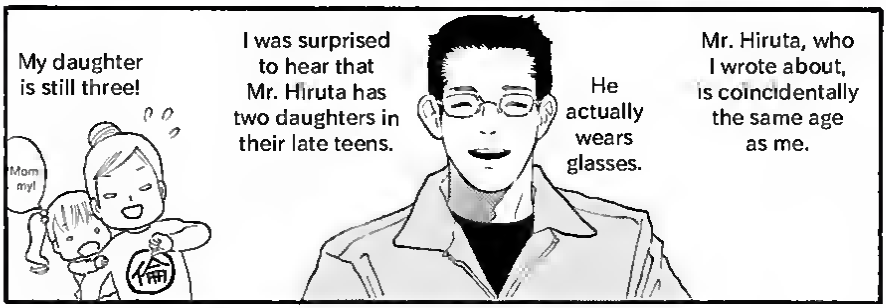

Good and evil.
They come all this way to do that...


Humans are completely helpless when it comes to...
life and death.

A single phone call can bring happiness or sadness...
Yes.
They're fine.
Yes.

...is testing both my heart and soul...
I feel that this great tragedy...


After that day, I always wear sneakers when I go out.
I walked past eight train stations in the pitch-black city. A woman I was walking with offered me a ride, then my editor (who arrived home first) came to pick me up... It was 11 pm when I finally made it home.
I waited five hours for the trains to start moving again... At 7 pm I decided to walk home.
It's cold!
On March 11th, 2011, I was at a restaurant in a meeting with my editors.
Ah!!


My daughter is still three!
Mom my!
I was surprised to hear that Mr. Hiruta has two daughters in their late teens.
He actually wears glasses.
Mr. Hiruta, who I wrote about, is coincidentally the same age as me.

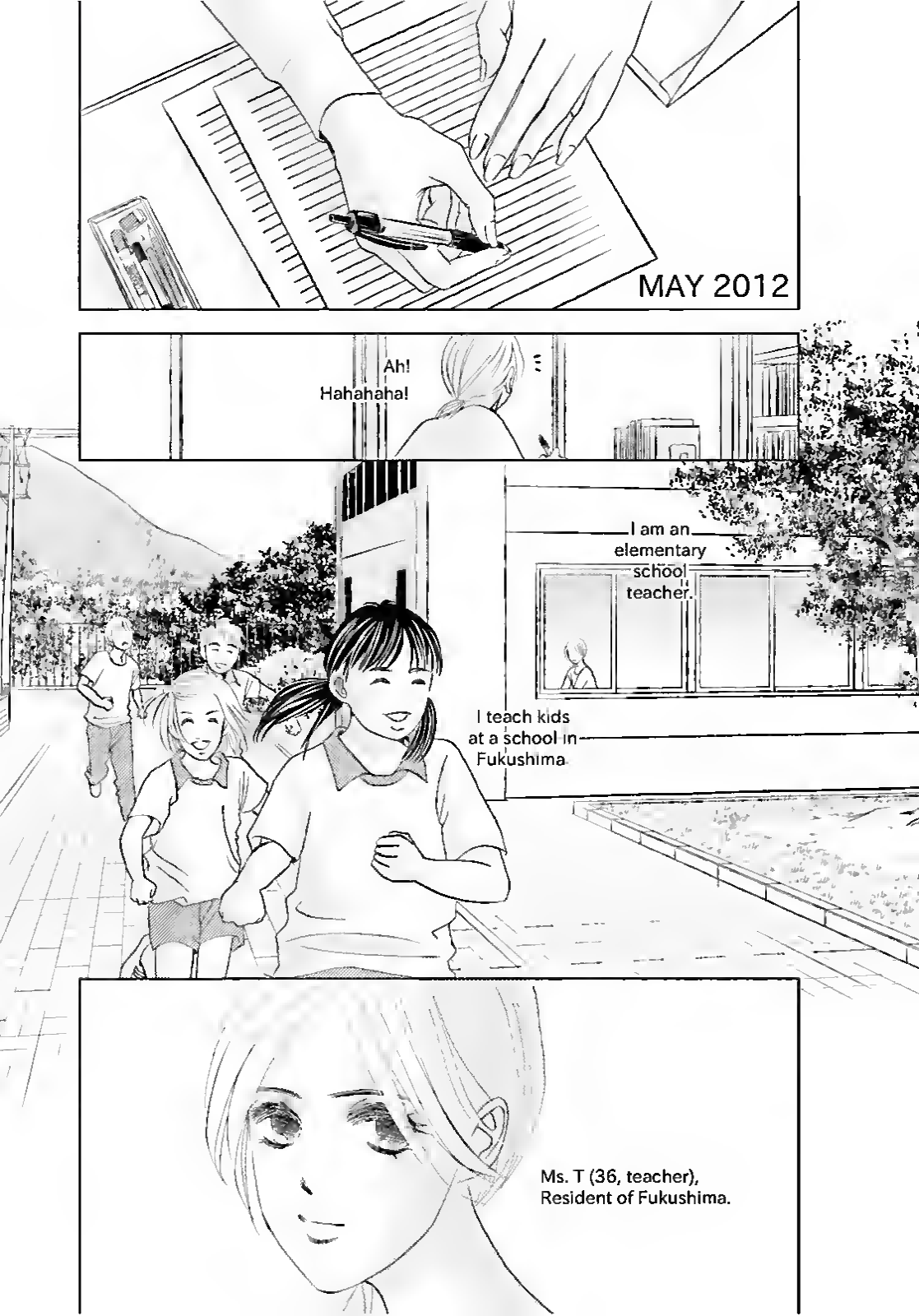
Remembering sad memories hurts, but I won't forget to prepare for another disaster, so there won't be any more sad memories.

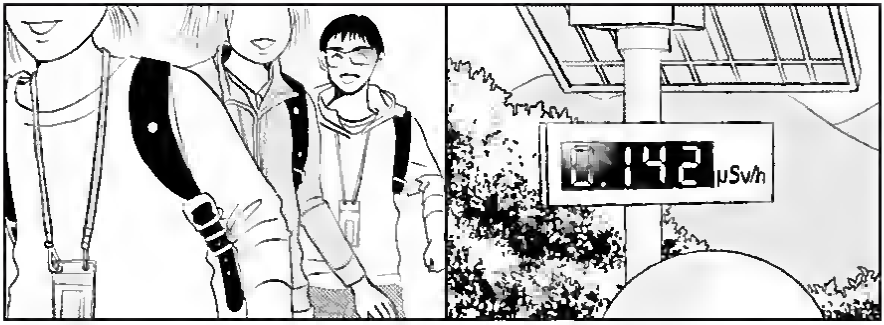
Apparently the human brain is programmed to forget sad memories quickly.

Story 4

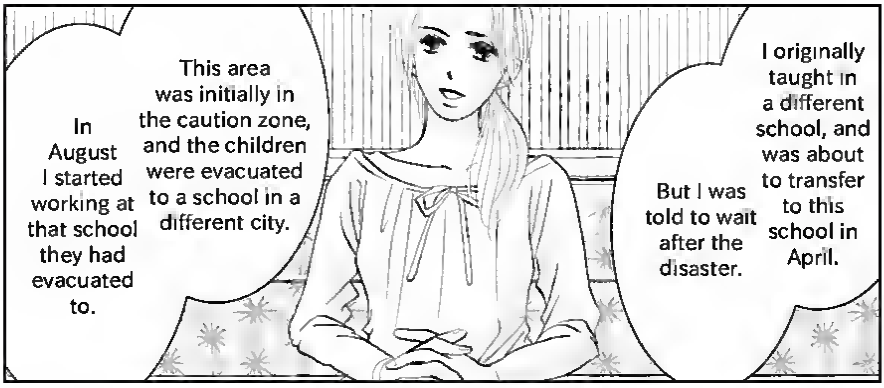
Satoru Hiura

Fukushima

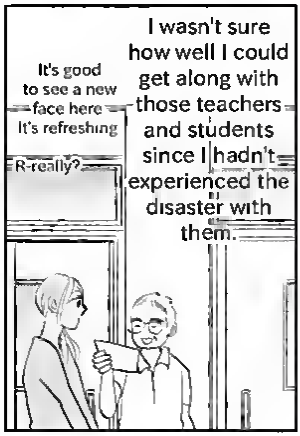

MAY 2012
Ah!
Hahahaha!
I am an elementary school teacher.
I teach kids at a school in Fukushima.
Ms. T (36, teacher),
Resident of Fukushima.

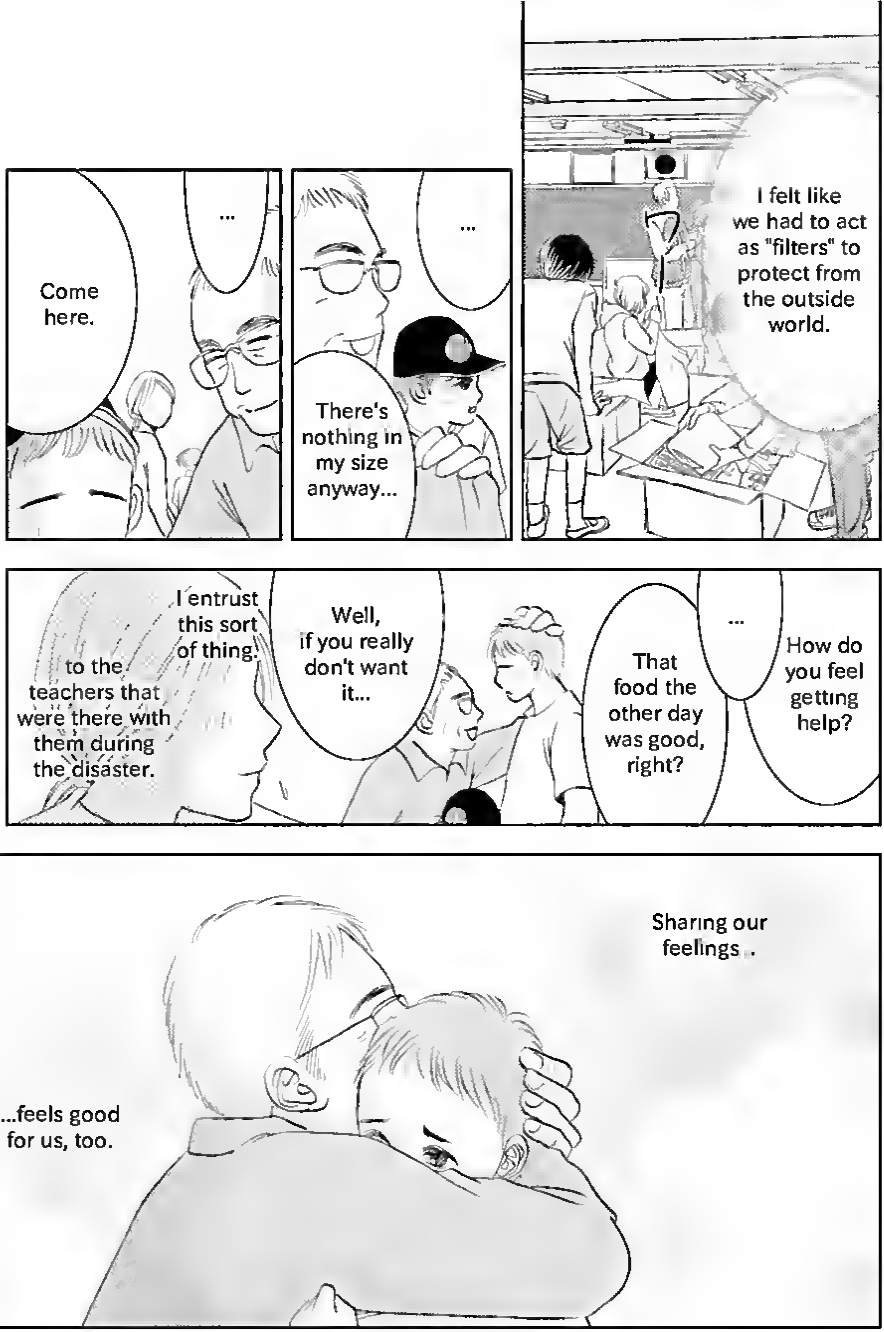


How did you get through the disaster after March 11th?


In August I started working at that school they had evacuated to.
This area was initially in the caution zone, and the children were evacuated to a school in a different city.
But I was told to wait after the disaster.
I originally taught in a different school, and was about to transfer to this school in April.

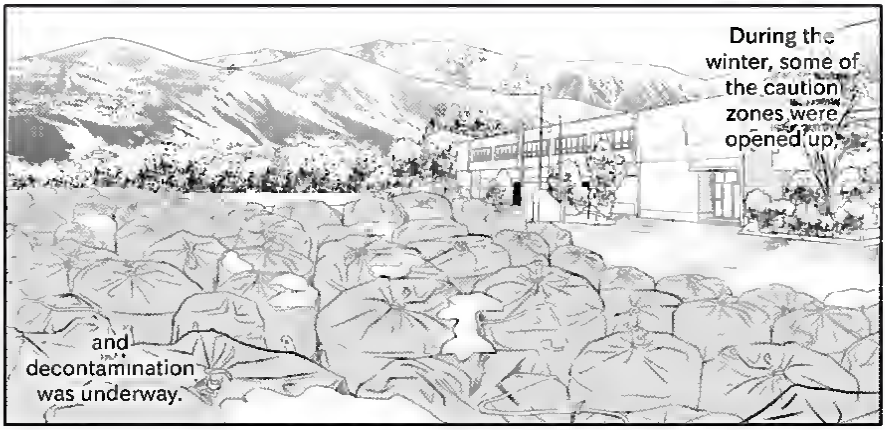
We received a lot of helpful support, but there were some things that disturbed them.
It was difficult, because the children stopped smiling.

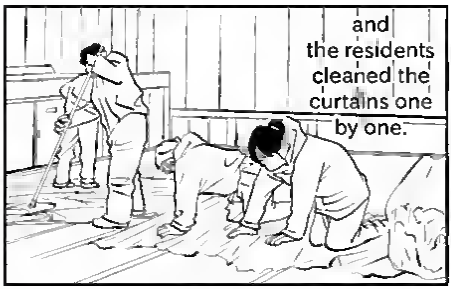

It's good to see a new face here It's refreshing
R-really?
I wasn't sure how well I could get along with those teachers and students since I hadn't experienced the disaster with them.

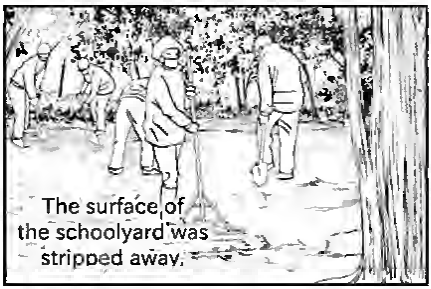

Come here.
...
There's nothing in my size anyway...
...
I felt like we had to act as "filters" to protect from the outside world.
I entrust this sort of thing to the teachers that were there with them during the disaster.
Well, if you really don't want it...
That food the other day was good, right?
...
How do you feel getting help?
Sharing our feelings...
...feels good for us, too.

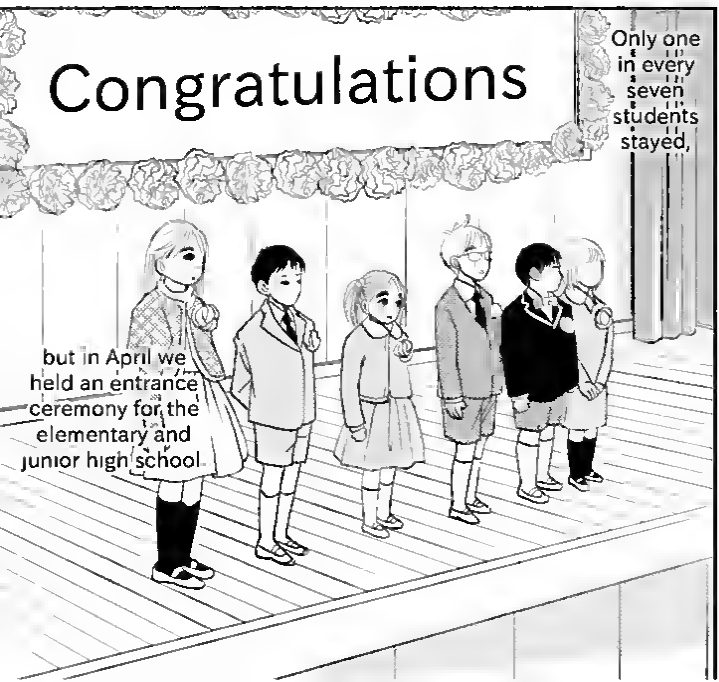
When did the children start smiling again?

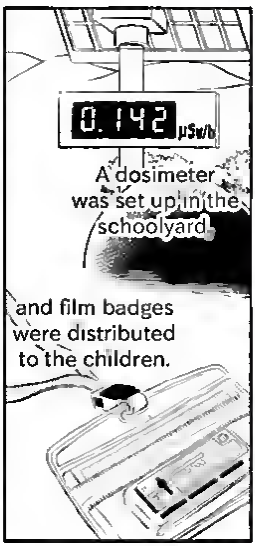
They could play without worrying about masks or long sleeves,
and they told us it was really fun, sparkling eyes and all.
People from many different prefectures offered to set up temporary evacuation camps for them.
It was most noticeable after summer vacation.
and they were able to express their feelings.
The parents also benefited from a change in environment,
Yes, that's right.
The exposure level was relatively low today ...
Yes, everyone's fine.
or call them once a month.
We keep a record of their addresses and phone numbers,
and send them letters...
There are some families that moved out of Fukushima.

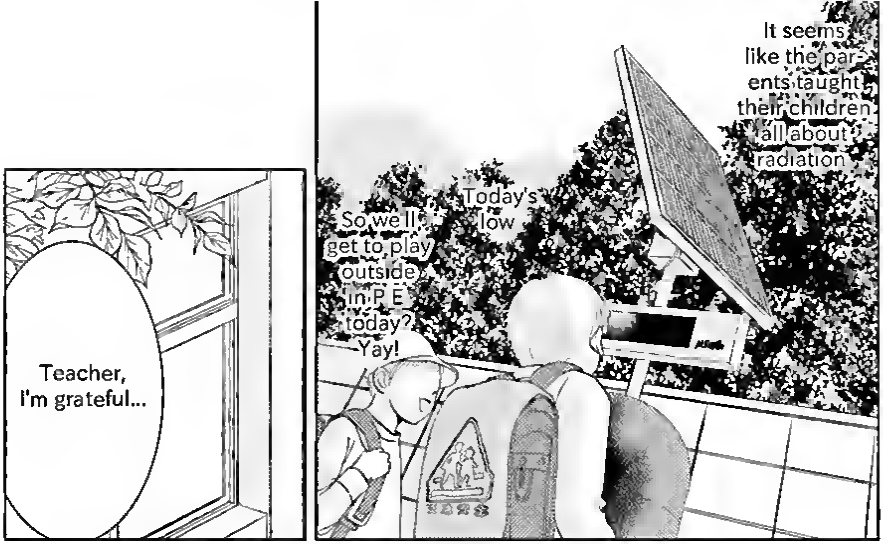

During the winter, some of the caution zones were opened up,
and decontamination was underway.

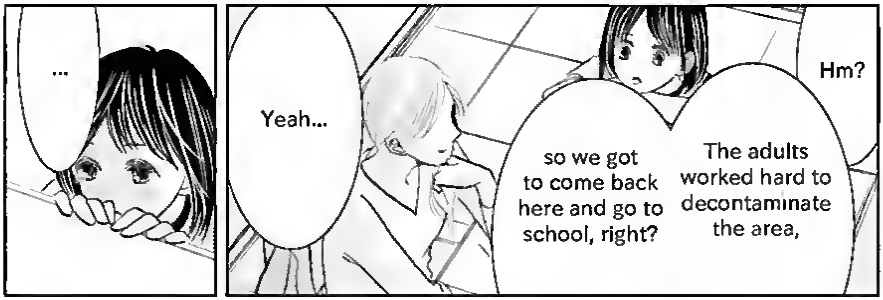

and the residents cleaned the curtains one by one.


The surface of the schoolyard was stripped away.


Congratulations
Only one in every seven students stayed,
but in April we held an entrance ceremony for the elementary and junior high school.


0.142 μSv/h
A dosimeter was set up in the schoolyard,
and film badges were distributed to the children.


Teacher, I'm grateful...
So we'll get to play outside in P E today? Yay!
Today's low
It seems like the parents taught their children all about radiation


...
Yeah...
so we got to come back here and go to school, right?
The adults worked hard to decontaminate the area,
Hm?

...Will everyone come back someday?

Right now, how do you feel about marrying and having children?

I'm not thinking of bearing children right now...

Actually... nothing at the moment.

If there's anything I can do for them... I want to.
Right now, it's taking everything in me to protect the children in front of me.
I want to protect them from everything.
Even if it's from the smallest thing...
For the future.

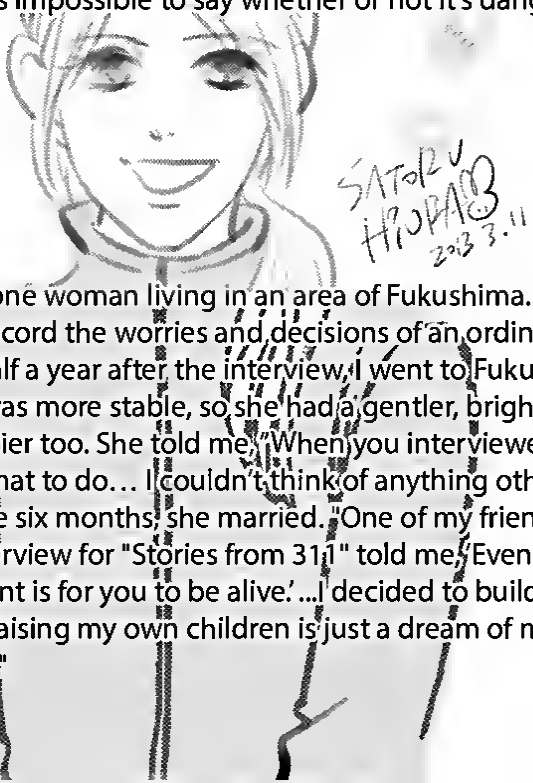
To tell you the truth, at first I felt uncomfortable writing about Fukushima for "Stories from 311."

If we write about Fukushima, we can't avoid mentioning the nuclear disaster. We're not specialists… Can we write about it? Isn't it still too early? If we don't understand it, shouldn't we not write about it?

With that in mind, I decided to go to the interviews, and met many people there. There were some things that confused me further, and other things that helped me understand. I learned that the attitude I had, to observe from a distance because I don't understand it, actually creates an environment where people couldn't talk and hurt the people in Fukushima.

Out of all the opinions I encountered during the trip, Ms. T's remark that she has no intention of bearing children was the most shocking to me. I wondered if I should include this in the manga or not, but I included it because it's something that women in Fukushima may worry about but not be able to speak of.

Fukushima is large, and the damage caused by the nuclear disaster varied depending on the location. The circumstances for women to have children or not varies too, so it's impossible to say whether or not it's dangerous.



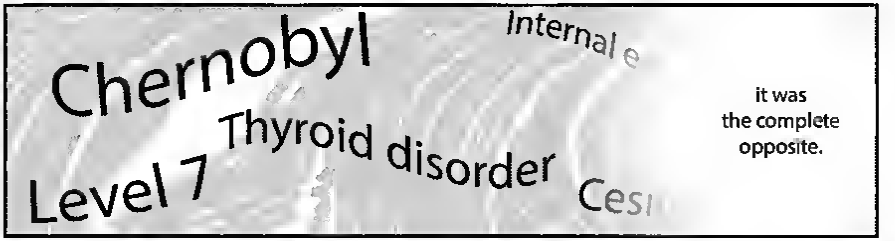
This is the opinion of one woman living in an area of Fukushima.
My intention was to record the worries and decisions of an ordinary woman during the disaster. Half a year after the interview, I went to Fukushima again to visit Ms. T. Her life was more stable, so she had a gentler, brighter smile which made me happier too. She told me, "When you interviewed me before, I really didn't know what to do… I couldn't think of anything other than the children." During those six months, she married. "One of my friends who learned about the interview for "Stories from 311" told me, 'Even if you don't want children, all I want is for you to be alive.' ...I decided to build a family with him. Right now, raising my own children is just a dream of mine. I may have changed a little..."

Story 5

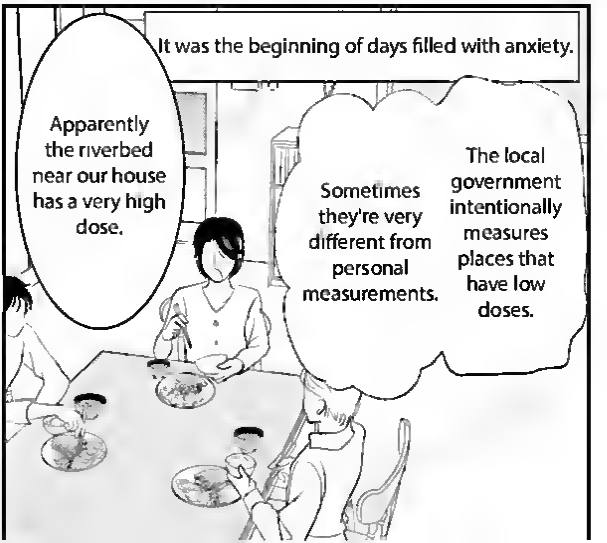
Keiko Okamoto

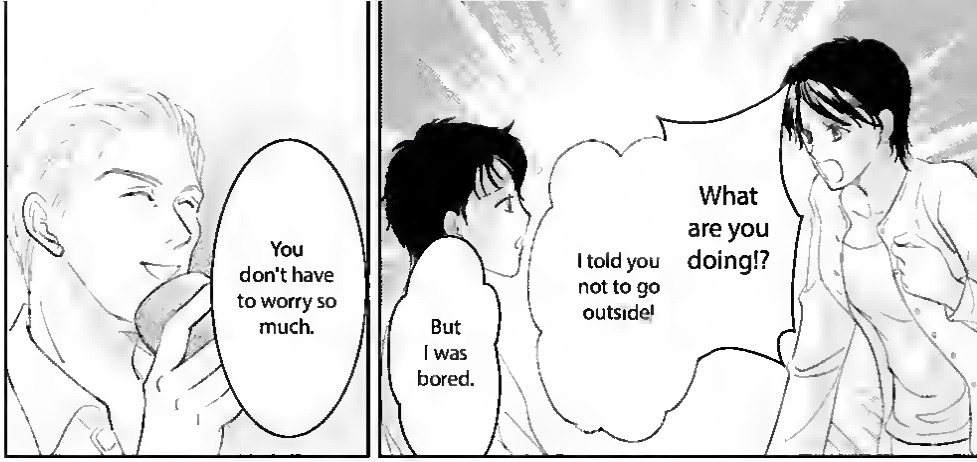
Fukushima

What is this...
No way...
But on the internet...
The government's remarks were repeated over and over.
There are no immediate health risks.
After the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear disaster...
Sanae Kimura (alias)
Resident of Fukushima.

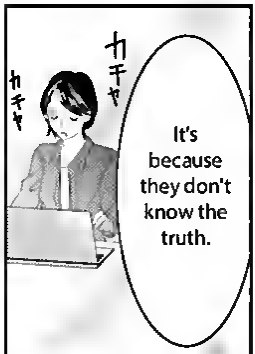

Chernobyl
Level 7
Thyroid disorder
it was the complete opposite.

Oh, I played soccer there in March.


It was the beginning of days filled with anxiety.
Apparently the riverbed near our house has a very high dose.
Sometimes they're very different from personal measurements.
The local government intentionally measures places that have low doses.

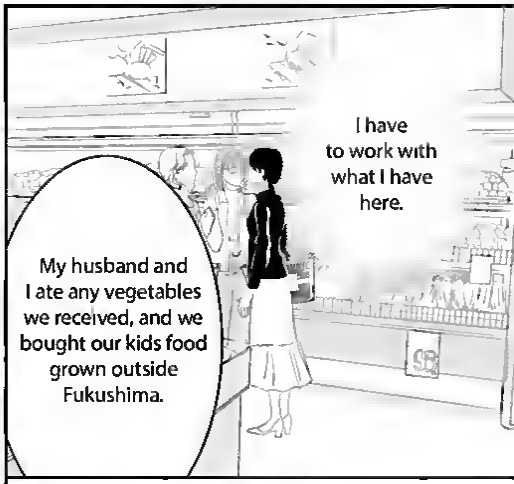


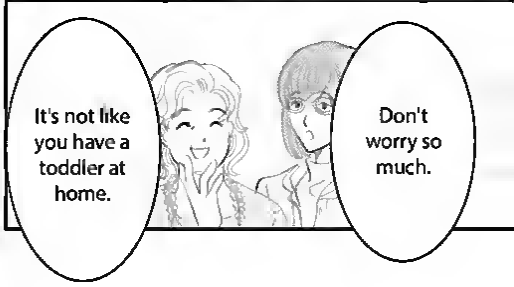
My husband is an employee of the government, so we couldn't leave Fukushima.
My husband, unlike me, was easygoing.
I couldn't control my son, who'd just started high school.



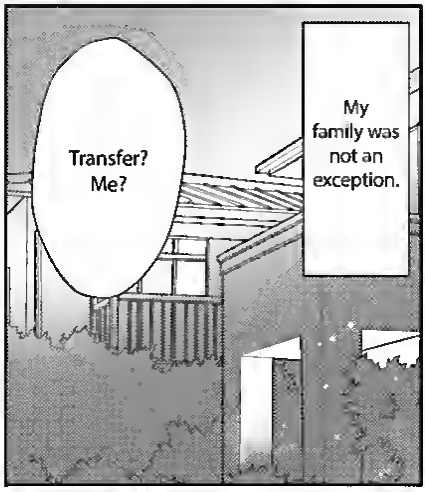
I didn't have anyone I could talk to, so I went to lectures and talked to people in organisations about radiation.

The difference between me and other parents who have big children was just surprising.


I have to work with what I have here.
My husband and I ate any vegetables we received, and we bought our kids food grown outside Fukushima.



Onions
Radiation dose
11Bq/kg
230円
I persuaded one of the large local supermarkets.
I have a small child, too.
I asked the stores to display radiation levels for each food.
I did everything I could ..
to decrease the level of exposure.
But...
Decon-tamination
Exposure
That pamphlet I gave you earlier,
there's a new one.
Oh, really...?
Oh, that...
They're...
Avoiding me...
Protect the children!


Transfer? Me?
My family was not an exception.

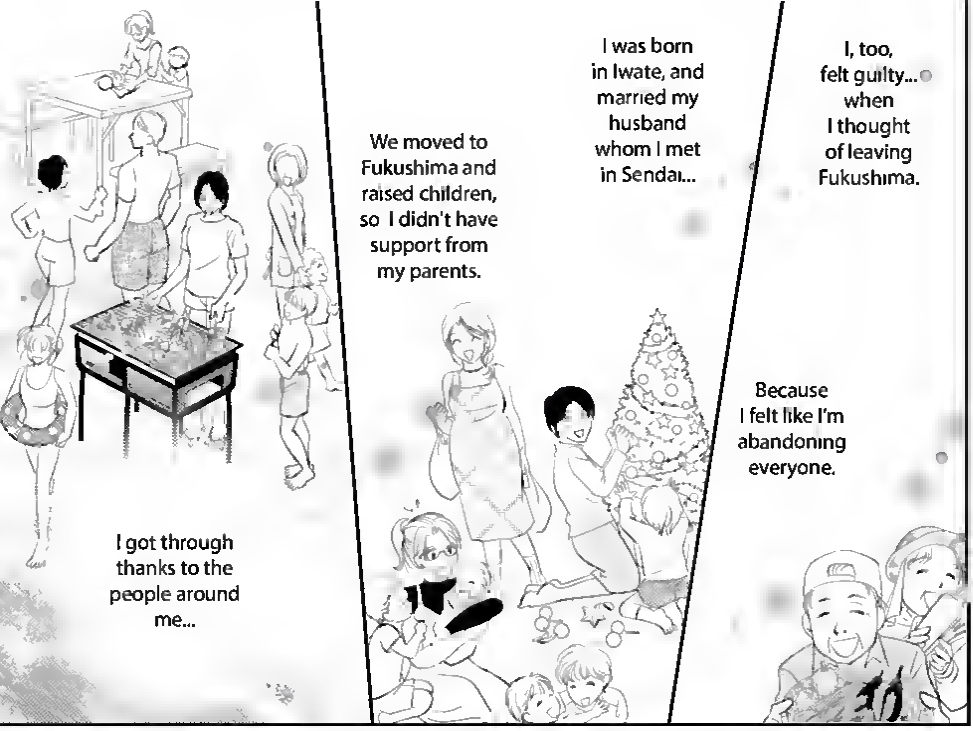
Everyone tried to avoid scary stories and anything that hindered reconstruction efforts.

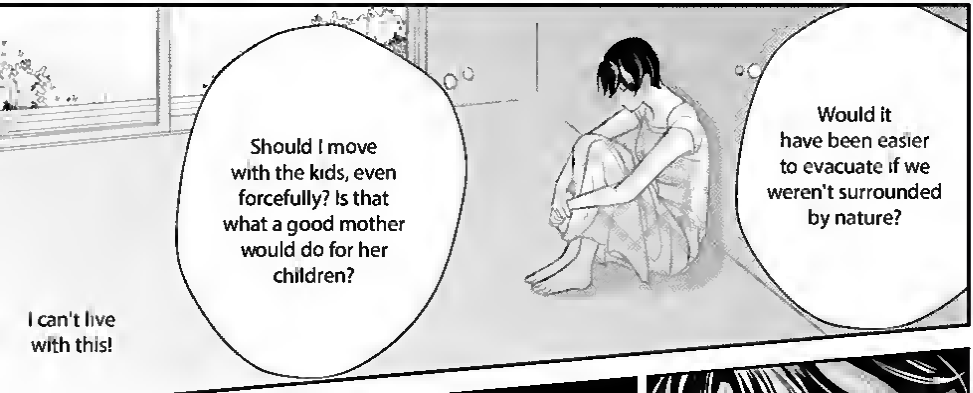
Sigh
That again?

Even preschoolers live here...
Nobody's transferred at my school...

Why are you staying in Fukushima?
Why won't you move here?
Then there was my family in Iwate...

It was hard to even discuss.
It was a delicate topic.
Everyone thought differently about the radiation.


I got through thanks to the people around me...
We moved to Fukushima and raised children, so I didn't have support from my parents.
I was born in Iwate, and married my husband whom I met in Sendai...
I, too, felt guilty... when I thought of leaving Fukushima.
Because I felt like I'm abandoning everyone.


Should I move with the kids, even forcefully? Is that what a good mother would do for her children?
Would it have been easier to evacuate if we weren't surrounded by nature?
I can't live with this!

I started to shut out information.
My thoughts were constantly swaying from answerless questions to helplessness.

The Strength of Constant Change.
It was written by a monk living in Fukushima, Soukyu Genyu.
It was a book that related the old Japanese classic "Hojoki" to the Fukushima disaster.
The new year came, and I picked up a book.
After that, I did my daily tasks,
but every day was depressing.
In a time where life lasted only about fifty years,
Kamo no Chomei experienced many disasters: fires, tornadoes, starvations and great earthquakes.
He realized that nothing ever stays the same in this world, and vowed to live with the flow.
The flow...
Don't jump to conclusions, don't fixate...
It was a way to deal with new things.
To live with the flow is to "sway."

I can sway...

It was as if my worries and fears,

and the chains binding my soul dissolved.

Shio Kouji: a seasoning made from rice-malt and salt

I'm making Shio-Kouji.

I researched food that would boost the immune system.

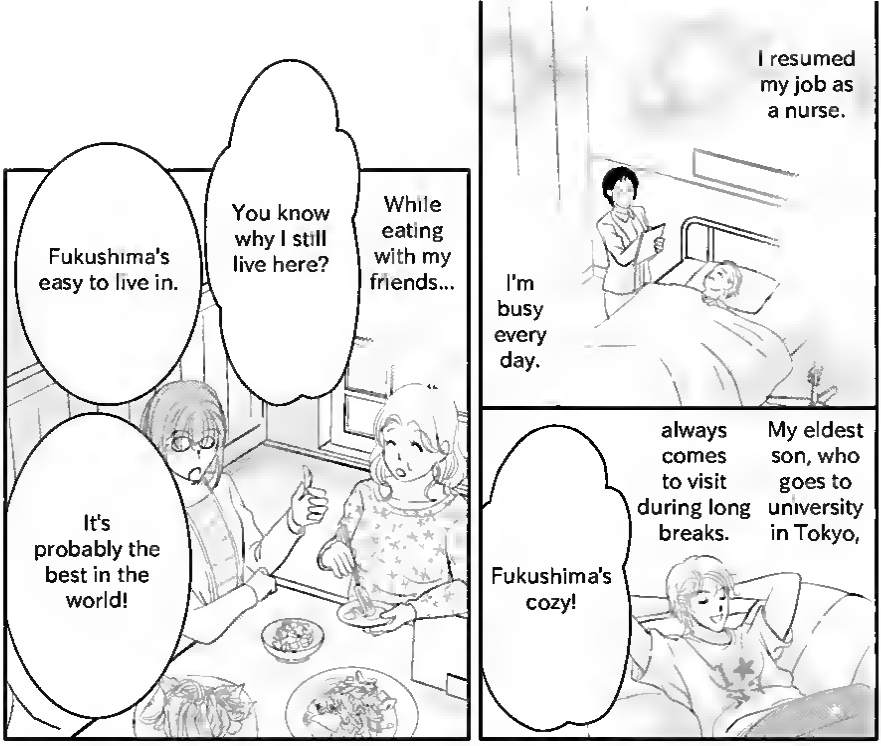
If it really bothered me, I would research the radiation doses.

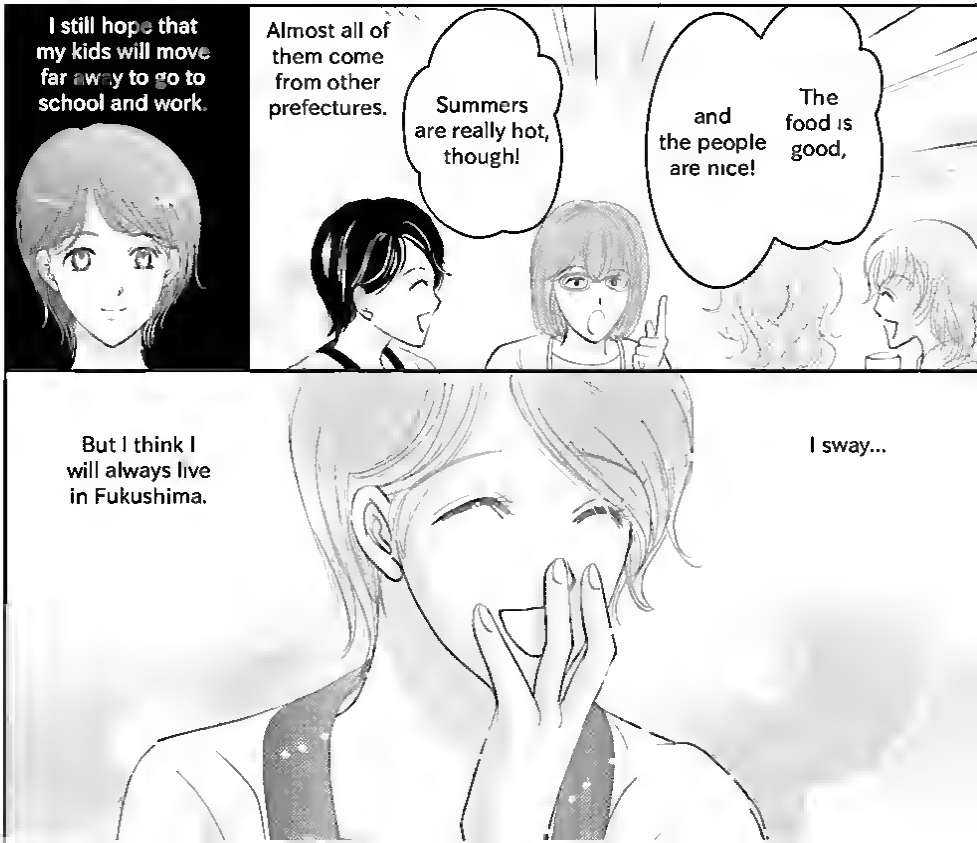
Sometimes there were foods made in Fukushima that were safer than other foods due to regulations.

Don't worry too much, don't be too content.

After that,

I tried to live with the "flow."


I resumed my job as a nurse.
I'm busy every day.
Fukushima's easy to live in.
You know why I still live here?
While eating with my friends...
It's probably the best in the world!
Fukushima's cozy!
My eldest son, who goes to university in Tokyo, always comes to visit during long breaks.


I still hope that my kids will move far away to go to school and work.
Almost all of them come from other prefectures.
Summers are really hot, though!
The food is good, and the people are nice!
But I think I will always live in Fukushima.
I sway...

When I was asked to write about the people in Fukushima, I wondered if I, an outsider, could convey their stories well enough. 311 was an unprecedented disaster, and Fukushima was the most complicated due to the nuclear reactors.

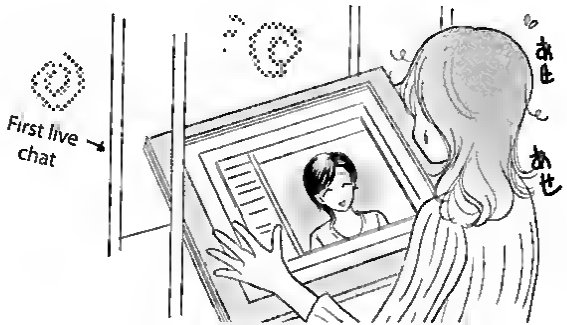
I read a book titled "100 People, 100 Stories," a collection of interviews of the Fukushima residents half a year after the disaster. When I read about their worries, anger, sadness, and the gravity of their decisions, I felt even more pressure.

Out of all the people, I decided to ask Ms. Sanae if I can make her story into a manga because she was a normal mother who was confused and worried in an emergency situation. I felt that her feelings were shared by many after the disaster, regardless of age, gender, or environment.

Unfortunately, I couldn't meet Ms. Sanae during my trip to Fukushima, so I talked with her through Skype later. Neither of us were used to video chats, and I'm not good at directing conversations since I am a manga artist, so I asked many vague questions. I'm sorry! But Ms. Sanae politely told me about her feelings. Mothers with older children usually don't worry about the effects of radiation, so Ms. Sanae worried that she was overreacting. She told me about what people who live there were actually feeling.

We are worried because we're not sure whether it's dangerous or safe, and it's hard on us because we want to respect others' opinions. This is what I think of is, "normal." And I learned the strength of "normal" people! Ms. Sanae, who resumed her job and protects her family, because she likes Fukushima and decided to stay. There are many mothers like her in Japan... so Japan is still all right! That was what I took away from participating in this project.

Thank you to everyone involved, especially Hiroshi Ueki (Happy Island Network), who set up the Skype call.



Ms. Sanae didn't know how to display video, so she couldn't see my face until the interview was almost over. I wonder if that was for the better...?

Keiko Okamoto

Story 6

Nagamu Nanaji

Fukushima

A uniform I wasn't meant to wear.
A white scarf.
...until that time--
I live in Kansai right now, but I lived in Fukushima...
Mirai Kobayashi (alias)
2nd year junior high school student
Resident of Himeji City, Hyogo

Iwaki City, Fukushima.
The earthquake happened a few days before the graduation at the elementary school.
Ahhhhh
Mirai, over here!
Okay!
I walked home in my indoor shoes, without my backpack.
Wh...
Oh no...
...Up until this part,
I think everyone experienced the same thing.
By the 13th, we somehow cleaned up the house and the internet started working.
Hey...
On the TV, Mr. Edano said there was some sort of explosion...
That was an explosion, wasn't it?
We should at least evacuate the kids.

My mother says that everyone's actions depended on whether they checked the internet or not.
That again..?
But look!
Apparently internet access rates in Fukushima are low, and a lot of people rely on the TV for information.
Everyone says it's dangerous!
You two...
Go to your grandmother's house in Hyogo, quickly!
What ...!?
Transfer!?
Even then, I believed that I would return to Fukushima some day.
The third reactor exploded within an hour after that.
The next day, the airport resumed service. My brother and I got on the first flight to Kobe

I haven't even graduated!
I haven't even said goodbye to my friends!
No!
I thought you came to pick us up!
What do you mean I'm transferring!?
What do I tell them?
Come on, you need to tell your friends.
It's just for now, okay?
It...
She couldn't say it was "forever."
My mother lied when she said it was "just for now."
It took a while to realize that the decision was meant to protect us.
"I'm transferring because it's dangerous there"!?
I can't! Everyone's still back there!

A "temporary" hand-me-down she got from a friend.
She gave me a uniform and told me it was "just for now."
"When are you coming back, Mirai?"
.. huh ?
... Yeah
Yeah.
How many is that now?
Really?
Huh!?
Ai moved to Tokyo !?
and he can't leave Grandpa alone.
My dad has to work,
Mhm.
Only my brother and I are staying here.
Yeah!
I made friends and joined a club here.
My mom comes to visit sometimes.
Yeah.

The junior high school I was supposed to go to,

had a blue scarf.

I want to wear a blue scarf, like my friends in Fukushima.

But...

I started to feel like that dream wouldn't come true.

Today is a special on Fukushima.

...I don't know.

People are so different.

We can't leave, so we have to believe it's fine.

It's danger-ous, but we can't leave.

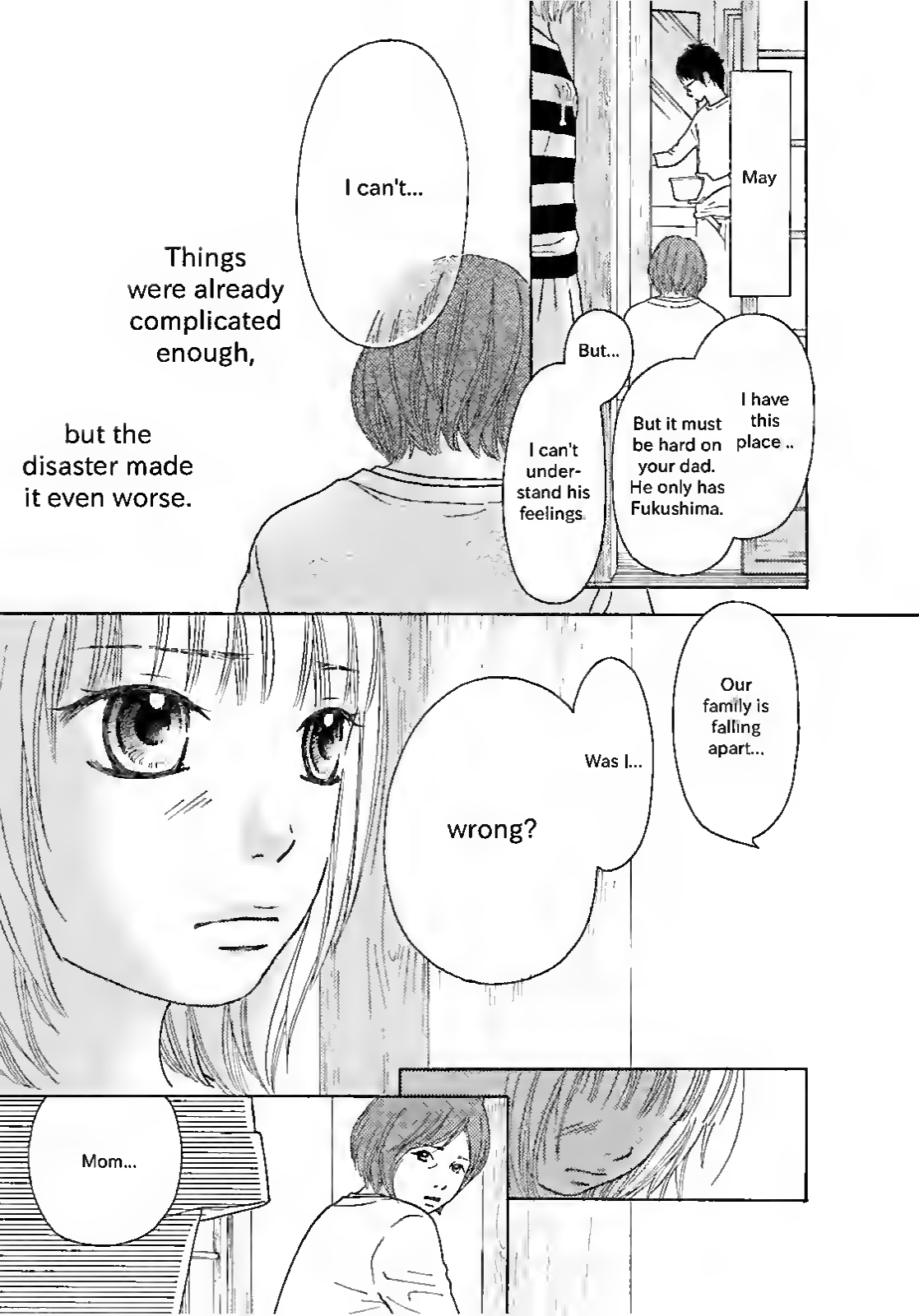
People who leave.

People who stay.

We can't leave, so we have to live carefully.

It's danger-ous.

It's all right.


Things were already complicated enough,
but the disaster made it even worse.
I can't...
May
But...
I can't understand his feelings.
But it must be hard on your dad. He only has Fukushima.
I have this place ..
Our family is falling apart...
Was I... wrong?
Mom...

A year later, I still don't know what's right and what's wrong.
I don't know, but...
Please buy me...
...a new uniform.
I can only live in the present.

Afterword

Nagamu Nanaji

The Fukushima problem is that delicate and deep.

They were worried for their own reasons, too.

When I went to Fukushima, I brought this up with Hiura-sensei and Okamoto-sensei.

I grew up in the world of girls manga, where the focus is to tell stories dramatically. Would I be able to write about Fukushima properly?

When the organizing team asked me to write about Fukushima, I was worried.

The nuclear power plant, huh?

I made sure nobody would be offended, that there were no mistakes, and wrote it so children could read it, too.

I did my own research, noted every detail of the family I was writing about, and talked to other people in Fukushima...

I did prepare myself, but it was no easy task.

To know and to tell others... That itself is a form of support.

If any readers have children in junior high school, please let them read this.

I want people to know that there are people who feel like this among the victims of the disaster.

As a manga artist and as a person, I am glad that I could participate.

Story 7

Tachibana Higuchi

Minamisanriku-cho, Miyagi

The last time he saw her, she was putting a blanket over a resident of the retirement home they worked at, which was also their evacuation center.

I saw Mama sparkling.

Papa had to tell Chi-chan about Mama, who went missing in the tsunami.

She had wings, and flew to heaven.

Kengo Sasaki, Age 44.

Chihiro Sasaki, Age 6.

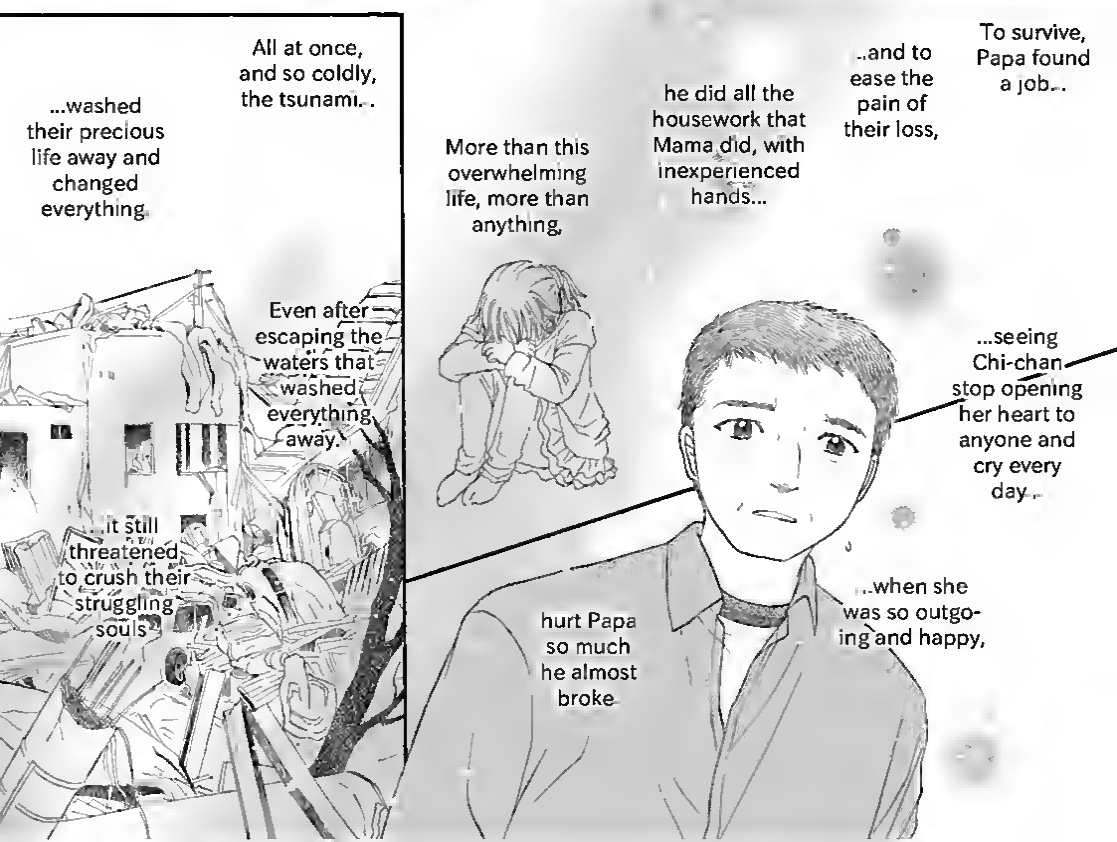
Right then, Papa tried to put his whole soul into words.

How could he tell her as gently as possible?

Would she understand this reality, which was difficult for even adults to face?

...was very difficult, indeed.
Naoko Sasaki, Age 38
When Chi-chan was a baby.
Fumiya Sasaki, Age 12
but for six-year-old Chi-chan to accept her mother's death...
Of course, it was hard for her brother, who had just finished elementary school,
I don't want an invisible Mama!
and the house they built two years ago
along with the beautiful Shizugawa scenery,
Papa also lost his sister in the tsunami,
After the tsunami, all he had left...
...was his children, who couldn't smile anymore.
I don't!
And a thank-you letter that Mama once wrote to Papa that miraculously survived the disaster.
These are Papa's precious, precious treasures.

Papa and the kids left their familiar town of Shizugawa, left all their friends
...and Chi-chan, who just started school, had to go to a school she didn't have any friends at, from their new apartment in Tome.


All at once, and so coldly, the tsunami...
...washed their precious life away and changed everything.
Even after escaping the waters that washed everything away...
...it still threatened to crush their struggling souls.
More than this overwhelming life, more than anything,
he did all the housework that Mama did, with inexperienced hands...
..and to ease the pain of their loss,
To survive, Papa found a job...
...seeing Chi-chan stop opening her heart to anyone and cry every day...
...when she was so outgoing and happy,
hurt Papa so much he almost broke

Even if we can't go back to our days before 311,

even if we have to bear these scars for the rest of our lives...

But I want to move on.

At this rate,

I want to be happy.

...we can't move on.

I want to bring back her smiling face.

Lucky you, Chi-chan.

It's a bit far from your apartment.

but you can go to the school in Shizugawa now. And your father can give you a ride.

June

When you start working again you won't be able to spend as much time together, which will be tough.
If you need any help, please ask.
She's still too anxious to leave me.
She hasn't gone anywhere by herself
August
Well... She still won't leave my side...
It's so hot!
Congra-tulations on moving into the temporary housing.
How is Chi-chan?
Her small hand wouldn't let go of Papa's hand.
It was as if that hand was afraid to lose another loved one.
Even if she's afraid at first, it might be a good opportunity.
There's a volunteer group that takes care of kids to and from school.
Why don't you try it?
Minamisanriku marketplace

"Yeah
Maybe we'll
try it."
I'll be
walking with
you to the bus
from today.
Nice to
meet you
Chi-chan,
I'm Miki.
Volunteer staff
Miki (alias)

Now that her mother's gone,
...is what a young child like her needs.
perhaps the presence of a woman...
She can feel as if she's walking with her mother...
And feel a warmth like hers...
...even just a little.
Even if she still misses her mother,
and her little heart still aches...
SCHOOL BUS
...and the loneliness and sadness goes on..
She still wants happy days to return.
With what she has right now,
So she struggles...
...to heal her pain...
no matter how many times she must stop,
she wants to be happy.
and find happiness in the smallest things. So she can smile.

To keep on moving..
One step at a time...
And seeing her happy,
became an angel.
Miki,
Chi-chan's mother...
...so energetic...
She's watching me...
...from the stars, from the sun, and from the moon!
...seeing the children...
Papa is comforted
Miki,
Thanks.
Thanks for being with me every day.

Interview Afterword

I remember that when I first set foot there, cherry blossoms and dandelions greeted me warmly.

This is my first time in Tohoku.

I'm from Kyoto,, which is surrounded by mountains

Wow!

Tachibana Higuchi

My "Stories from 311" interview was in May 2012, during Golden Week at Minamisanriku.

During the interviews, they may seem cheerful,

but if we mention the future around them, they instantly become gloomy.

Right now, if they think about the future, their worries will crush them...

So maybe they're struggling to be energetic so they can live for now, even if it means not thinking about what comes next.

I was very nervous, but they were kinder and more cheerful than the media portrayed.

Would you like some seaweed?

Fisherman

As for the interviews, because I was listening to the experiences of the local people who are still suffering...

Our volunteer guide said something that stayed with me.

Inside the car

There are a lot of tourists and volunteers who used this Golden Week to come here, so it seems livelier than when I was last here.

I thought that since winter is over and they don't have to worry about the snow or cold, and since the flowers are blooming that would comfort them a little... but then,

If many people come here like this,

they can feel like they haven't been forgotten...

...and maybe that gives them the energy to keep on living every day.

Their energy won't hold up.

For the people here have that kind of strength... But if we just label it as "strength" and forget the feeling they hold deep inside...

Oh...

While seeing the land and the locals become more energetic, I wished that many more people would visit. That's one way to support.

The food here is really good!!

This kirakira bowl is awesome!

The sake was so good, I bought some as a souvenir.

Let's go to the hot springs next

Let's come here again!

Not forgetting them is a form of support... Even if it's just the first step.

If things become even a little tough for me I complain... Wow...

油麩丼

Story 8

Ume

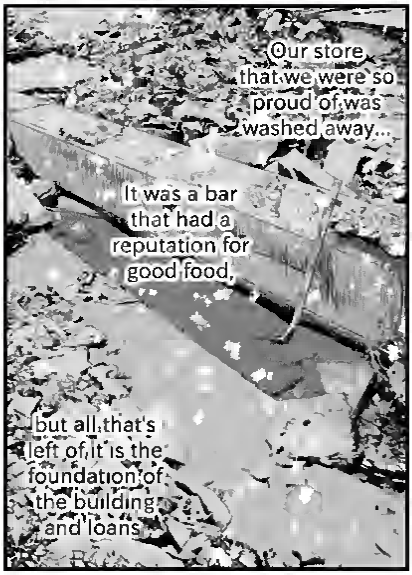
Minamisanriku-cho, Miyagi

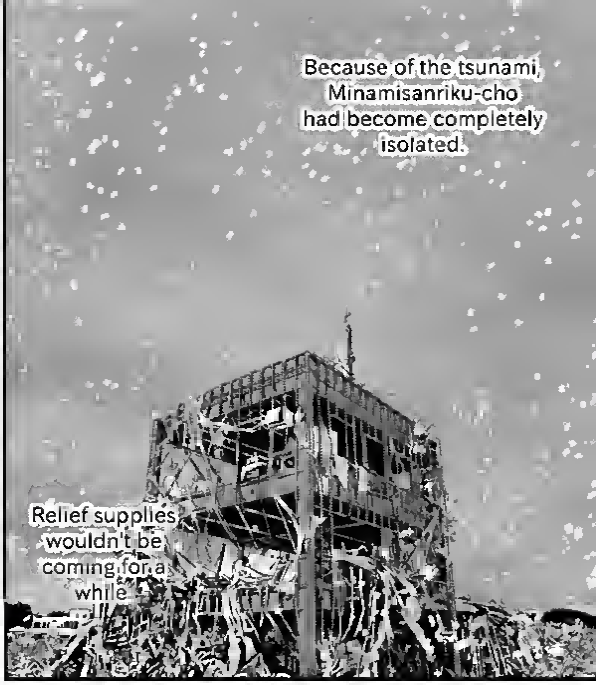
Minamisanriku-cho,
Miyagi
SOSH
Shizugawa High School
evacuation center.

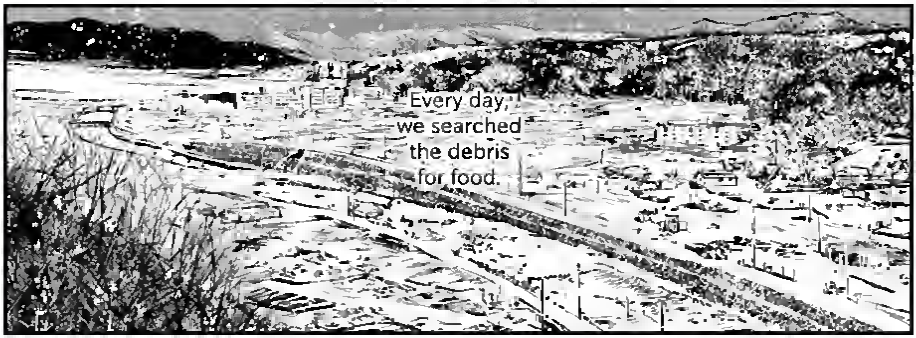
Tomo-
chan.
It's been
a few days
since that
day.

Brother
...
Tomotaka Uchida
Age 35

Wanna
go look for
food?
Takuma Uchida
Age 40


Our store that we were so proud of was washed away...
It was a bar that had a reputation for good food,
but all that's left of it is the foundation of the building and loans.


Because of the tsunami, Minamisanriku-cho had become completely isolated.
Relief supplies wouldn't be coming for a while.

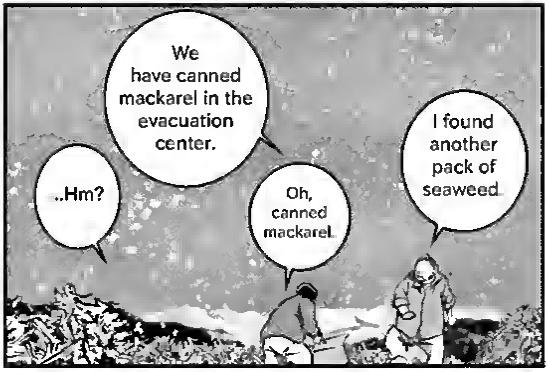

Every day, we searched the debris for food.

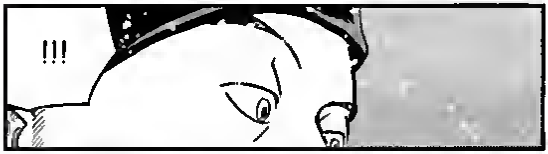
Just more frozen seaweed.
Did you find anything?

Oh.

What... do you think will happen next?
...I dunno.

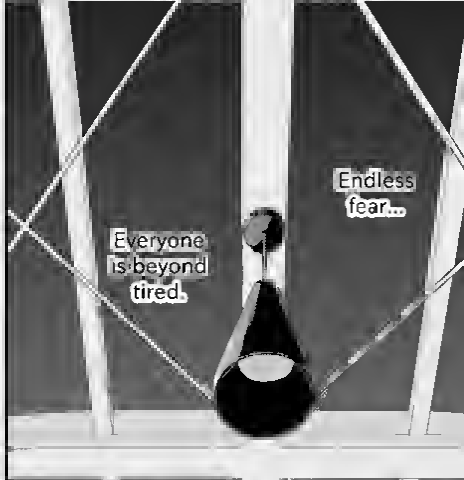
were appreciated in the dull dietary life in the evacuation center.
Strong flavored condiments, like soy sauce and mayonnaise,
Look,
Mayonnaise.
Whoa!
You're a hero!
This rice ball is frozen.
She survived all that, and yet... It's a pity.
But it's thanks to the cold that our food has lasted so long.
I want to eat warm food.
Well, it's so cold...
Yesterday the cold took old lady Tanaka...
Well, yes, but...
おめでとう


We have canned mackarel in the evacuation center.
..Hm?
Oh, canned mackarel.
I found another pack of seaweed.


!!!

That's our...!!
調理師免許証
Licensed chef Uchida

Yeah.
It wasn't that long ago, though.
Wow, it didn't get washed away.
It brings back memories


Endless fear...
Everyone is beyond tired.

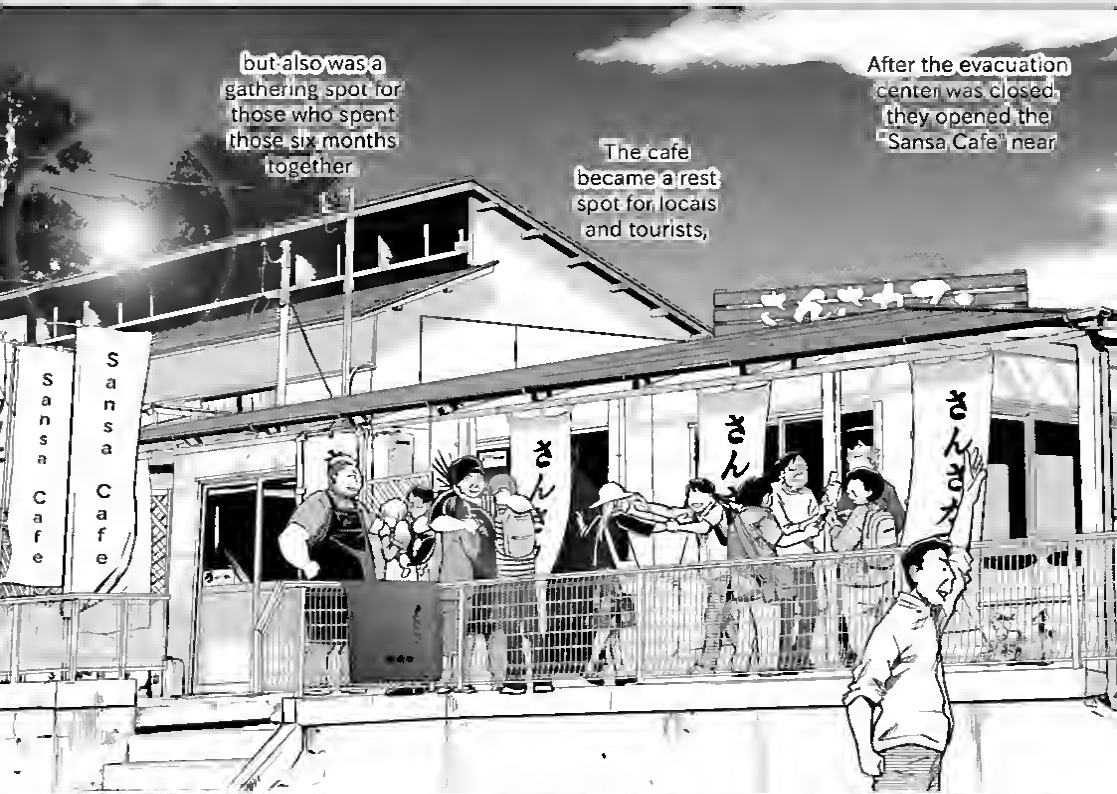
Let's go.
Yeah.

What about fire?
Hey, in the school kitchen...
Yeah.
There's a large pot
There must be some intact propane somewhere.
How is it?
Don't rush me!
After all, we're connecting things that don't match.

Yeah!!
What?
Hm?
we're not...
...some helpless victims.
Yeah!

We're chefs!!!
It's hot!
Haha, don't burn yourself!
It's warm.
It's good
Whoaaaa
Mackarel and seaweed stew!!

they protected the health and lives of 250 people.
During the six months at the evacuation center,
After that, the Uchida brothers were put in charge of food.
Haha, you think?
Is everyone... ...a bit fatter than before?


but also was a gathering spot for those who spent those six months together
The cafe became a rest spot for locals and tourists,
After the evacuation center was closed, they opened the "Sansa Cafe" near
Sansa Cafe
Sansa Cafe
さんさカフェ

Ume's
Minami-sanriku trip!
Ume
(Takahiro Ozawa & Asako Seo)
南三陸さんさん商店街
MINAMISANRIKU SUN SUN SHOPPING VILLAGE
There is another lively place here, the Minamisanriku Sun Sun Shopping Village.
For this story, I wrote about the Uchida brother's Sansa Cafe.
I'll buy it!
The sake brewery was washed away, so this is the only one left.
Their sales point was a bit different.
I went to Minami-sanriku We can do this together!
Even after they lost their stores, the owners worked hard to recover.
魚
I told myself I was supporting the recovery, and went on a shopping spree.
This fish assortment is perfect as a souvenir!
This Kizuna roll looks good Can I buy it?
This Kirakira rice bowl is the thing I remember the most.
I ate a salmon roe and sea urchin half & half.
Please visit them and have a taste of this bowl of happiness!

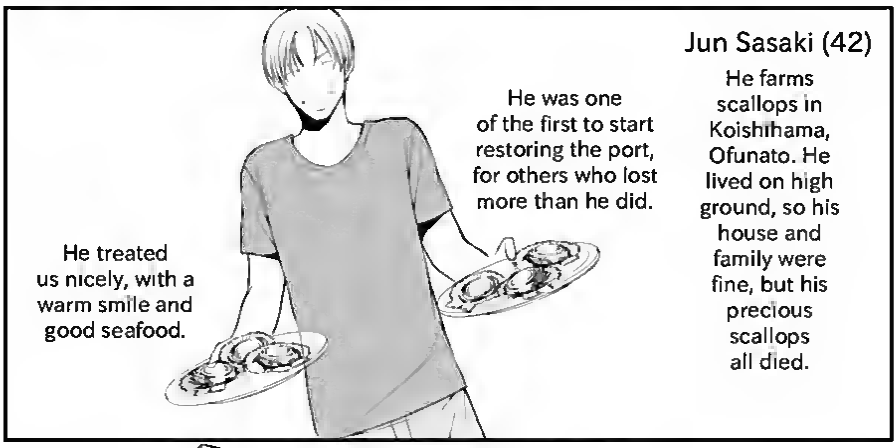
The ingredients change depending on the season.

Story 9

Mayu Shinjo

Otsuchi-cho & Ofunato City, Iwate

I interviewed two of these cheerful fishermen...
The first things restored were the ports... so the fishermen were the ones to cheer everyone up.
Most of the areas washed away were fishing villages. The fishermen also supported these villages.


Jun Sasaki (42)
He farms scallops in Koishihama, Ofunato. He lived on high ground, so his house and family were fine, but his precious scallops all died.
He was one of the first to start restoring the port, for others who lost more than he did.
He treated us nicely, with a warm smile and good seafood.

大船渡屋台村
The pubs are lively, and laughter resounds. But if you look around, you can see grass growing where the debris was.
Time has definitely passed since the disaster.
In Ofunato, there is a temporary shopping area where people can eat fresh seafood straight off fishermens' ships

A year and a half after the disaster...

Can I report this recovering town authentically?

We drank, and after we could comfortably talk to each other, I told Mr. Sasaki my feelings.

Mr. Sasaki ...

To be honest, I don't know what to write.

I want to say something to the readers about the places affected, but...

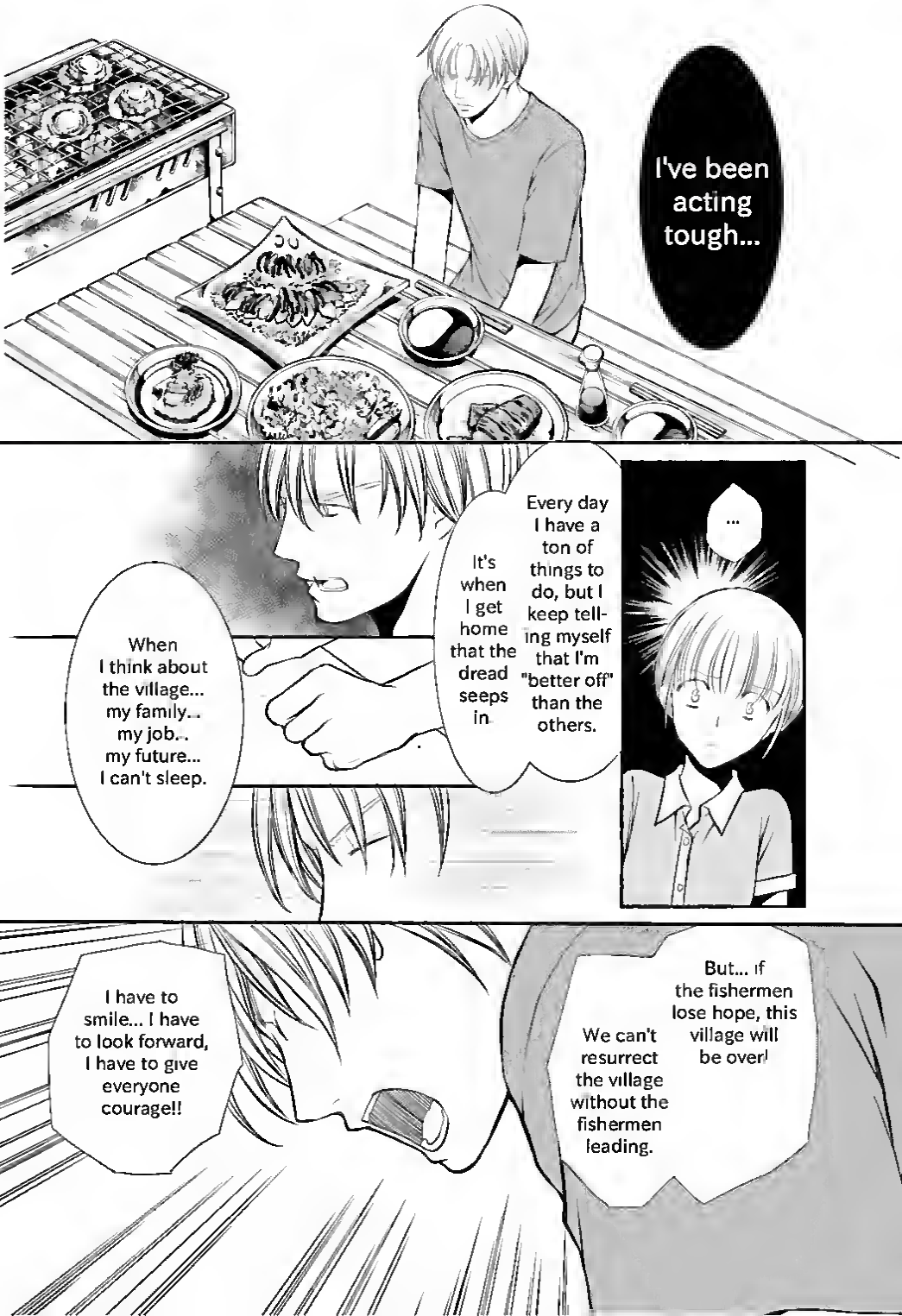
But I also don't know if I should write about the sadness of the past, since it's already been a year and a half...

I think I understand that everyone fears that this disaster will "fade away."

If that's the case, I don't want to write about how everything is restored

...

...what should I write, what should I say?


I've been acting tough...
...
Every day I have a ton of things to do, but I keep telling myself that I'm "better off" than the others.
It's when I get home that the dread seeps in.
When I think about the village... my family... my job... my future... I can't sleep.
But... if the fishermen lose hope, this village will be over!
We can't resurrect the village without the fishermen leading.
I have to smile... I have to look forward, I have to give everyone courage!!

Mr. Mamoru Abe (33), a fisherman in Otsuchi, married his girlfriend Ms. Hiroyo in July after the disaster.
He also played a huge role in the success of the "Thanks from Otsuchi Rock Festival".
Then, I knew what to write about.
But that's... all just me acting tough!!
A year after... We wanted to say thanks...
Right after the disaster... and even now, many people have supported Otsuchi through our hard times.
So we held a rock festival!!
Our friend asked the Street Beats, a group of artists, and they agreed to help.

Mr. Abe happily recounted his memories for me.

Mr. Abe encouraged his friends, convinced the town office, and the festival was a success... 8000 people came to see various artists in different genres perform.

Everyone said it was impossible at first...

He went out to sea to protect his boat.

During the disaster, he was at home. He tried to go to Ms. Hiroyo's house 3 miles away but the village was such a mess that he gave up.

A sleepless night came, and the next morning the only thing he could see...

Cars kept honking and clouds of dust covered the area. He watched helplessly as the waves swallowed the village.

The tides changed in ways he'd never seen before, and the water pulled back so far that people could walk to the nearby island, the village's symbol.

His cell phone didn't work, and he worried about his grandpa ..

was his hometown, completely changed

There's nothing left!!

That is...

When the sirens started, she evacuated to higher ground but tried to go back to see.

Don't go!!

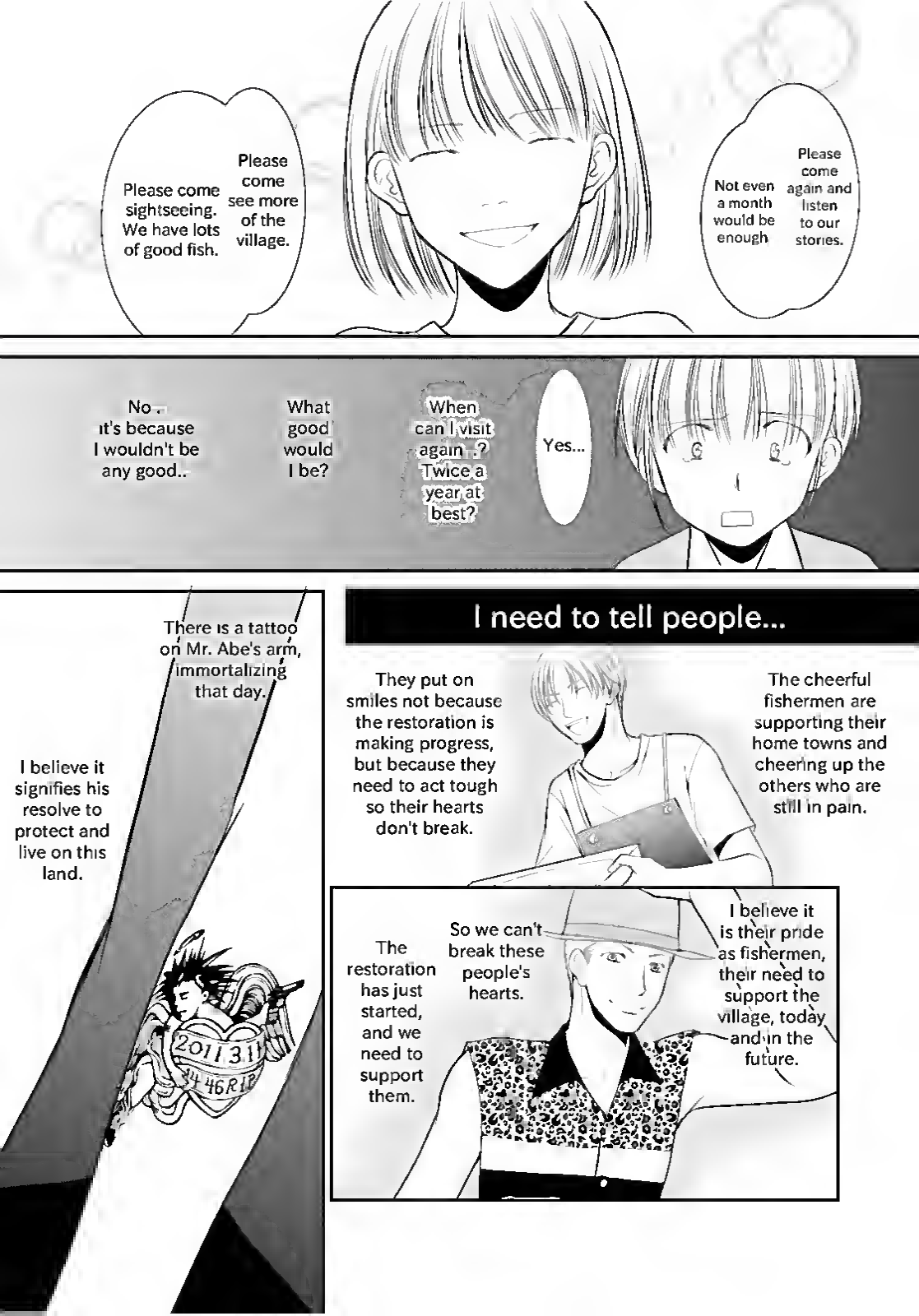
When Ms. Hiroyo saw the debris that used to be Otsuchi village, she wondered if she'd been dead by now.

He pulled his ship to the port, and reunited with Ms. Hiroyo at her workplace. Both of their houses were washed away.

It took her a month to go back to her normal life.
Sometimes she saw dead bodies, covered in dirt
She kept walking towards the mountains, in search of a safer place
She was stopped by a middle schooler.
Run away!!

The rock festival was also a tribute to the music that supported them when it was painful.
Even so... there was music. They got through the tough environment at the evacuation center thanks to music.

All I could do was answer your questions.
Sorry... So many things happened...
But... it wasn't so...
After the interview, Ms. Hiroyo said...
Maybe I'm making them remember....
...things that they would rather not.
Neither Mr. Abe or Ms. Hiroyo talked about the disaster.
While I was asking questions, I thought...


Please come sightseeing. We have lots of good fish.
Please come see more of the village.
Not even a month would be enough
Please come again and listen to our stories.
No . it's because I wouldn't be any good..
What good would I be?
When can I visit again ? Twice a year at best?
Yes...
I need to tell people...
They put on smiles not because the restoration is making progress, but because they need to act tough so their hearts don't break.
The cheerful fishermen are supporting their home towns and cheering up the others who are still in pain.
The restoration has just started, and we need to support them.
So we can't break these people's hearts.
I believe it is their pride as fishermen, their need to support the village, today and in the future.
There is a tattoo on Mr. Abe's arm, immortalizing that day.
I believe it signifies his resolve to protect and live on this land.
2011 3 11
3 4 46 R 12

About this manga...
by Mayu Shinjo

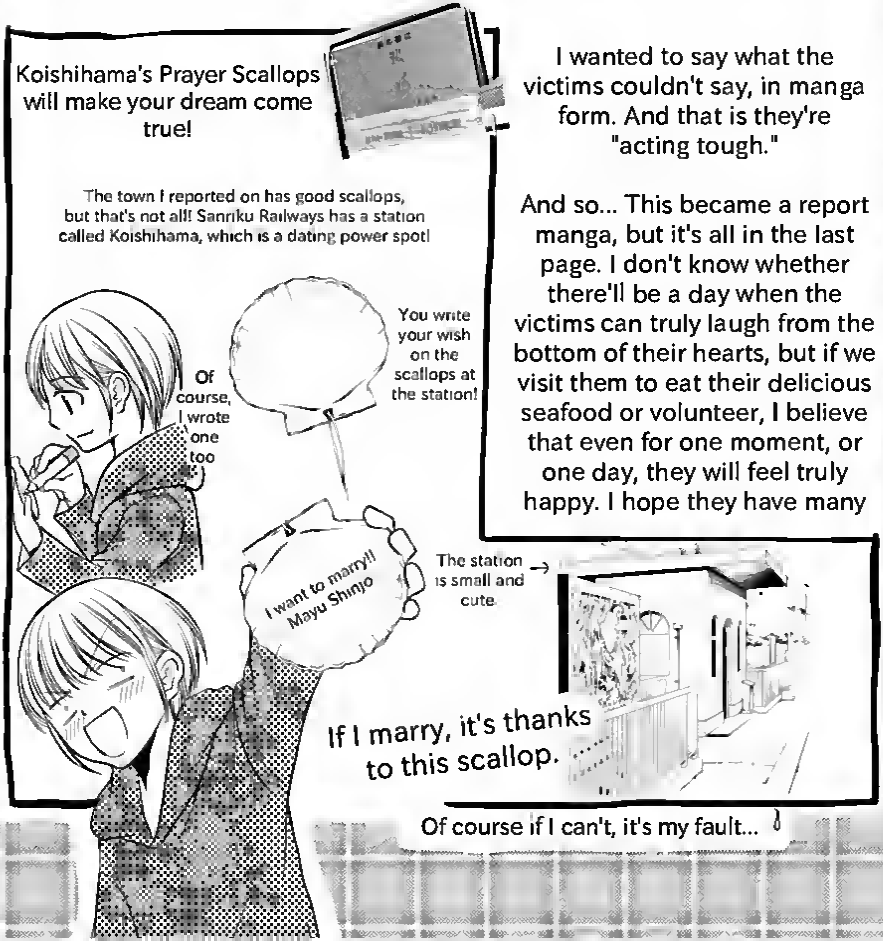
I think everyone who contributed to this book will agree:

There weren't enough pages!!

Everyone else summarized it...and made it easier to understand...but I couldn't.

Maybe it was because I interviewed two people, but I couldn't write the story properly.

I was planning to write what the victims wanted others to know, but I didn't know what to say. The cheerful fishermen...the fishermen who pull everyone along even though they themselves are struggling...the fishermen who think positively. I heard about them in my interviews, but those are merely experiences reported in the media. As I listened to their stories, I thought maybe they had something else they wanted to say. Then, when I heard they were acting tough, my heart hurt for them.


Koishihama's Prayer Scallops will make your dream come true!
The town I reported on has good scallops, but that's not all! Sanriku Railways has a station called Koishihama, which is a dating power spot!
You write your wish on the scallops at the station!
Of course, I wrote one too
I want to marry!! Mayu Shinjo
The station is small and cute.
If I marry, it's thanks to this scallop.
Of course if I can't, it's my fault...

I wanted to say what the victims couldn't say, in manga form. And that is they're "acting tough."

And so... This became a report manga, but it's all in the last page. I don't know whether there'll be a day when the victims can truly laugh from the bottom of their hearts, but if we visit them to eat their delicious seafood or volunteer, I believe that even for one moment, or one day, they will feel truly happy. I hope they have many

Story 10

Mari Okazaki

Rikuzentakata City, Iwate

My children grew up, so I thought I'd have some fun.
Katsutoshi Tomiyama (71), owner of jazz cafe "IMAGINE"
Mr. Tomi-yama! Fire!
I opened a jazz cafe at a nice place I stumbled upon on the Goishi Coast.
February 11th, 2010. It was destroyed in a fire a year before the disaster
There's a good place in Rikuzen-takata.
Mr. Tomi-yama.
I thought I lost everything.

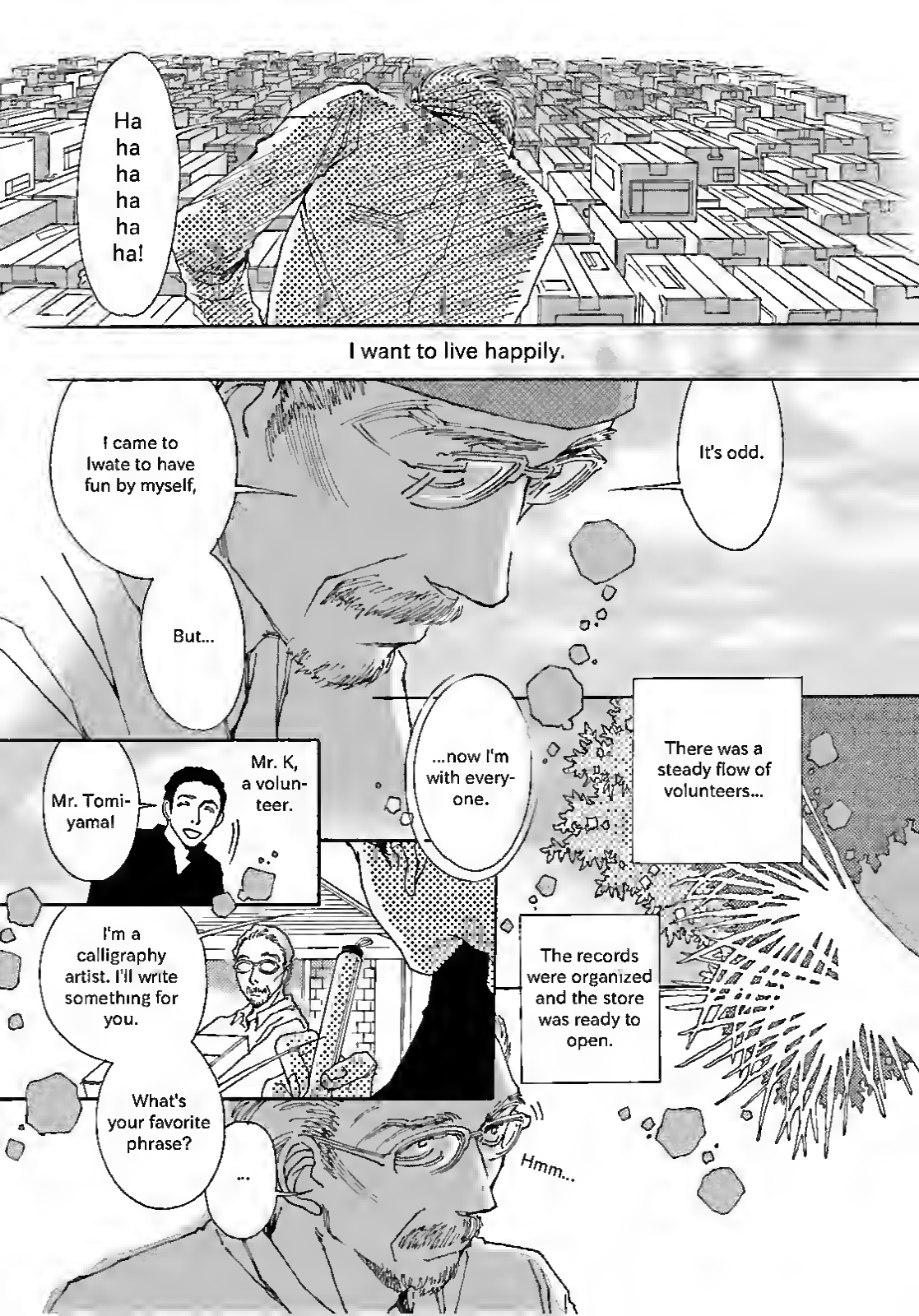
It's a historic building, I thought you would like it.
I'll buy it.
The construction started August 2010.
I designed it myself, drew the floor plans,
I asked my electrician and carpenter friends to help...
...and on December 22nd 2010, I opened the cafe.
Three months later...
Run to higher ground!

ゴオオオオオ
I thought, "Hey, that's a large roof".
Then I realized it was mine.
Then I thought...
"There's nothing to eat for dinner."
I had lost everything again, not just food.

In hindsight,
it was odd, but...
...the junior high school I evacuated to was going to have a inauguration ceremony that day.
There's a banner.
What are they going to do?
Mommy ...
He's so small.
What will happen to him?
What will happen?
Plans for my next shop... What my purpose is... What people should do... And whether or not...
At the evacuation center, I used a cardboard box and wrote feverishly.

the town should be resurrected.
Why don't you open another jazz cafe in our store?
Mr. Tomi-yama.
My friends who owned a clothing shop...
Um... My rent...
Let's wait and see for a year.
After a year...
...We can think about it again.
We'll pay for it for now.
Um... I don't have any money.

Because of the disaster happened...
I want to believe...
...that living is the important part, not money.
I want to think about happy things.
I want to create a cheerful store and live happily.
...people sent jazz records from all over the country.
When I said that the store doesn't have a single record because they were swept away,
The store got media coverage.
A hundred boxes!
Heh...

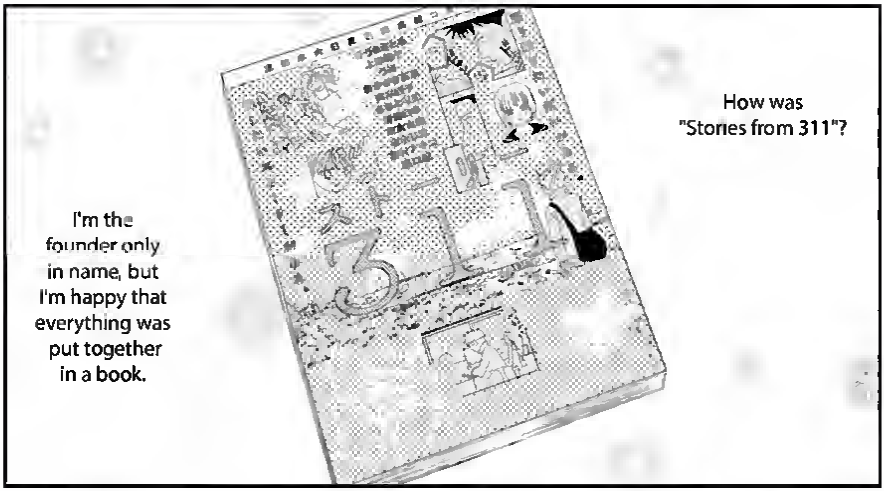

Ha ha ha ha ha!
I want to live happily.
I came to Iwate to have fun by myself,
But...
It's odd.
...now I'm with everyone.
There was a steady flow of volunteers...
Mr. Tomiyama!
Mr. K, a volunteer.
I'm a calligraphy artist. I'll write something for you.
What's your favorite phrase?
...
Hmm...
The records were organized and the store was ready to open.

Mr. Tomiyama,
My dream is...
"Que sera, sera"
That's quite the dream!
I'm serious!
...to see my work displayed in the Louvre.
Ah...
Yeah.
Yeah.
Do your best.

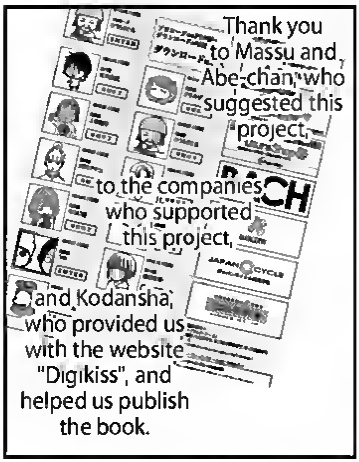
Mari Okazaki
December 2012

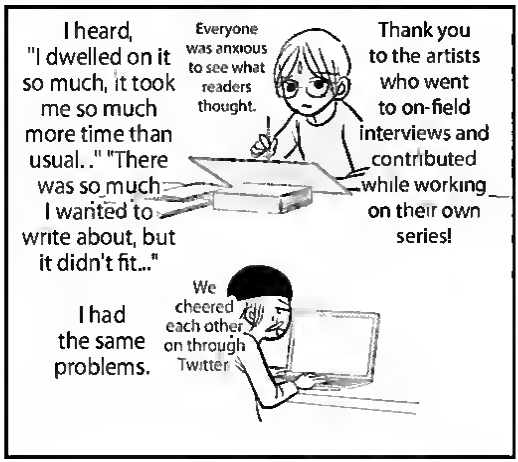
Epilogue

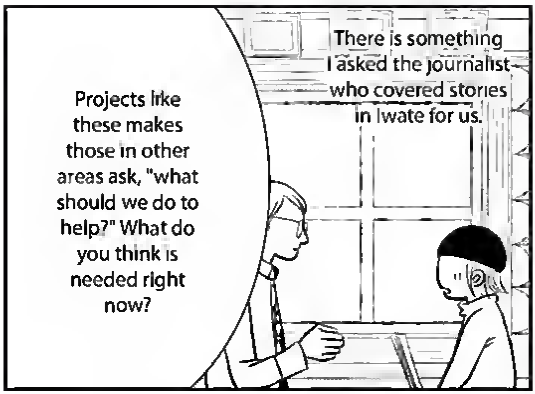
Satoru Hiura

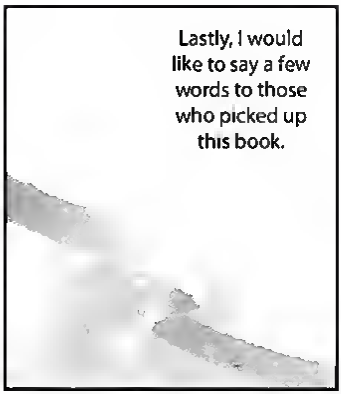

How was "Stories from 311"?
I'm the founder only in name, but I'm happy that everything was put together in a book.

A special thanks to those who allowed us to put their personal stories into manga form!
I'm sorry to those who gave us their time but we couldn't write about...
This year, I visited many disaster areas, and met many people.


Thank you to Massu and Abe-chan, who suggested this project,
to the companies who supported this project,
and Kodansha, who provided us with the website "Digikiss", and helped us publish the book.

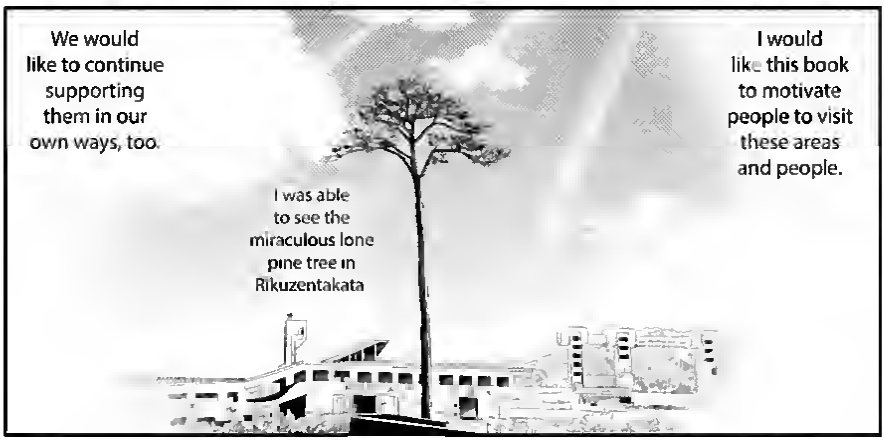

I heard, "I dwelled on it so much, it took me so much more time than usual.." "There was so much I wanted to write about, but it didn't fit..."
Everyone was anxious to see what readers thought.
Thank you to the artists who went to on-field interviews and contributed while working on their own series!
I had the same problems.
We cheered each other on through Twitter


There is something I asked the journalist who covered stories in Iwate for us.
Projects like these makes those in other areas ask, "what should we do to help?" What do you think is needed right now?


Lastly, I would like to say a few words to those who picked up this book.

It's enough if they visit, eat and drink..
..and leave with stories to tell.

Hmm.


We would like to continue supporting them in our own ways, too.
I was able to see the miraculous lone pine tree in Rikuzentakata
I would like this book to motivate people to visit these areas and people.

This project, "Stories from 311", was possible because of the support of many companies and people. We would like to thank them here.

Supporting Companies

ASAHIネット
Asahi Net, Inc.

TRADE SAFE
TradeSafe, Inc.

FutureShop2
Future Shop, Inc.

BACH
Bach, Ltd.

for your support!

Riho Sachimi

Mayu Shinjo

Yuki Suetsugu

Nagamu Nanaji

Tachibana Higuchi

Supporting Companies

JAPAN CYCLE

Japan Cycle, Inc.

wacom

Wacom, Inc.

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TM

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Kyodo Printing Co., Ltd.

Design support

BOOK DESIGN!

NARTI;S

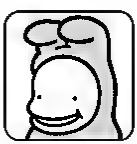
Nartis, Inc.

Thank you

Satoru Hiura

Rinko Ueda

Ume



Mari Okazaki

Keiko Okamoto

Cooperative Associations/Companies

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goo
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Interview Cooperation, Project Cooperation

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Referenced Works

"Letters from Minamisanriku - The Great East Japan Earthquake"
Edited by The Letters from Minamisanriku Production Partnership
"100 People, 100 Stories Volume 1 - To Stay in Fukushima, or to Leave Fukushima" by Yasumi Iwakami

"Stories from 311" Office

Masami Masuga

I hope this book will stay in your hearts, and maybe motivate you to visit.

Tomoko Abe

I believe everyone in Japan has their own story to tell after March 11th, 2011. I hope sharing these stories heals the wounds a little and helps create a better society.

Stories from The Great East Japan Earthquake

Stories from 311

KADOKAWA MANGA

Story and Art by

Satoru Hiura / Rinko Ueda / Ume / Mari Okazaki / Keiko Okamoto / Riho Sachimi / Mayu Shinjo / Yuki Suetsugu / Nagamu Nanaji / Tachibana Higuchi

MANGA DE KAKINOKOSU HIGASHINIHON DAISHINSAI STORY 311
© Satoru HIURA / Rinko UEDA / Ume / Mari OKAZAKI / Keiko OKAMOTO / Riho SACHIMI / Mayu SHINJO / Yuki SUETSUGU / Nagamu NANAJI / Tachibana HIGUCHI 2013

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